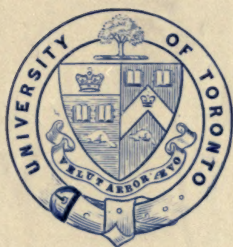


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 01666589 5

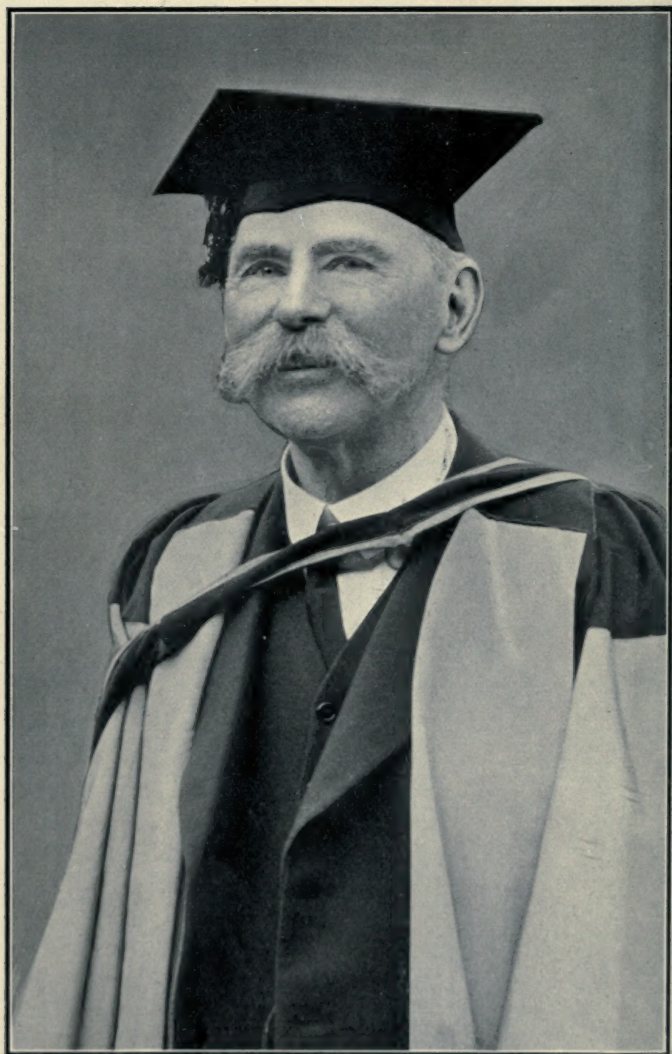


Presented to
The Library
of the
University of Toronto



from the city of New York

DOUGLAS HYDE



DOUGLAS HYDE

HE. 8
11333
X. 12

DOUGLAS HYDE

PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

BY
DIARMID COFFEY



366876
— 5. — 39.
19.

THE TALBOT PRESS LIMITED
DUBLIN & CORK

1928

NOTE

I wrote a life of Dr. Douglas Hyde in a series called "Contemporary Irishmen," published by Maunsel & Co. in 1917. When he was elected President the Talbot Press asked me to bring out a new edition, but so much had happened in the twenty-one years since the book was published that I found it necessary to re-write the greater part of it. I am much indebted to the President for information.

D. C.

DA

965

H9C6

1938

CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. YOUTH | 7 |
| II. THE IRISH LANGUAGE | 24 |
| III. FOUNDING THE GAELIC LEAGUE | 48 |
| IV. IRISH IN EDUCATION | 66 |
| V. HYDE'S VISIT TO AMERICA | 79 |
| VI. THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY... .. | 91 |
| VII. HYDE LEAVES THE GAELIC LEAGUE | 108 |
| VIII. HYDE AS A WRITER | 126 |
| IX. FROM RETIREMENT TO PRESIDENT | 142 |

GENEALOGICAL TREE OF DOUGLAS HYDE

From Arthur Hyde who came to Ireland in the reign of Queen Elizabeth

Sir Arthur Hyde of Carrigonedra, Co. Cork, d. 1644—Helen, daughter of
Anthony Power, Co. Waterford

William—Catherine, daughter of Robert Tynte of Cork

Arthur of Castle Hyde, Co. Cork, d. 1688—Elizabeth, daughter of
Sir Richard Gethin, Bart.

Joan Yeats—Arthur—Mary, daughter of Col. George Evans

Arthur * George other children

The Rev. Arthur, Rector of St. Anne's, Shandon—Anne, daughter of Benjamin
Green of Youghal.

The Rev. Arthur, Vicar of Killarney—Sarah, daughter of George French of
French Park

The Rev. Arthur, Vicar of Mohill—Frances, daughter of Sir Hugh Crofton, Bart

The Rev. Arthur, Canon of Elphin and Rector of Tibohine—Elizabeth, daughter
of the Venerable John Orson Oldfield, Archdeacon of Elphin

Arthur John Oldfield Annette—John Cambreth Kane

DOUGLAS—Lucy Kurtz

Nuala
d. 1912

Una—Judge Sealy

* Ancestor of the senior line which ended on the death of John Hyde in 1885

LIFE OF DOUGLAS HYDE.

CHAPTER I.

YOUTH.

AN CRAOIBHIN AOIBHINN,* Dr. Douglas Hyde, President of Ireland, comes of a Norman, or possibly pre-Norman stock. A branch of the family held property at Denchworth, in Berkshire, where there are still numerous monuments of the Hydes in the parish church, notably a fifteenth century stained glass window and some striking sixteenth century brasses. A rubbing of the memorial to Olyver Hyde, from whom Douglas Hyde is eleventh in succession, is reproduced facing page 8.

They may have had influence at the Court of Queen Elizabeth when Arthur Hyde was a

*The pseudonym An Craibhin Aoibhinn was adopted by Dr. Douglas Hyde for his first published work. It comes from the chorus of a song and means "the delightful little branch," i.e., Ireland, or possibly the Pretender. It became the name by which he is usually called in Irish, but he dropped the adjective later on.

boon companion of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and it was in Hyde's house at Denchworth that the unfortunate Amy Robsart, Leicester's wife, is said to have ended her life. Douglas Hyde has a clock engraved with a crown and fleur-de-lis which is said to have been given to his ancestor by Elizabeth.

Arthur Hyde got a grant of land in Munster from Elizabeth and settled at Carraig an Éide, on the river Blackwater. His family prospered and built the fine house of Castle Hyde, which stands above the Blackwater, and is famous for its beautiful terraced gardens. There is a well-known poem written by a local bard which describes it in flowing Irish metre though in English words. A version is given in a note to Hyde's own book, *Mo Thuras go hAmerice*.

The family remained in possession of Castle Hyde until 1851. The senior line ended with the death of John Hyde in 1885, and Douglas Hyde now represents the main line of the family.

The Hydys, of course, were members of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy, and there is nothing in their history which shows sympathy with the nationalist cause in Ireland. The one possible exception to this statement is from a story told by James Stephens, the Fenian leader, that



Of your charite pray for the soules of Olyver hyde elowys & Agnes
his wyfe the whiche Olyver decessed in the yere of our lord god m cy fye
hundredth and fetyne on whole soules Ihu have mercy Amen



RUBBING OF MEMORIAL BRASS TO OLYVER HYDE AND AGNES
HIS WIFE, FROM DENCHWORTH CHURCH, BERKSHIRE

after Smith O'Brien's rising Sir Patrick Hyde befriended him but, even if true, this does not prove that Sir Patrick sympathised with Fenianism.

Arthur Hyde, great-grandson of the original Arthur, had a second son, George, whose son Arthur took orders in the Church of Ireland, and became the ancestor of a line of clergymen, all called Arthur, the fourth and last of whom was father of Douglas Hyde. As can be seen from the pedigree on page 6, Douglas Hyde's great-grandfather had taken a wife from the Frenches, of French Park, Co. Roscommon, ancestors of the present Lord de Freyne, and through her this branch of the family moved from Munster to Connacht, for they were in turn rectors of Mohill and Tibohine (French Park).

Arthur Hyde, rector of Mohill, married the eldest daughter of Sir Hugh Crofton, Bart., of Mohill, and his son, Canon Hyde, of French Park, who remained rector of Tibohine until his death in 1905, married Miss Elizabeth Oldfield, daughter of the Archdeacon of Elphin, so Douglas Hyde is a Connacht man on both sides of his family. Douglas was the youngest of three sons. His eldest brother died, while still a young man, in 1879; the second brother, John Oldfield,

in 1896. Neither married. There was one sister, who married Mr. John Cambreth Kane, son of John Kane, D.L., of the Castle, Mohill. Mrs. Kane took the rectory of French Park when the parish of Tibohine was amalgamated with that of Croghan, and is still living in the house in which she and Douglas Hyde were brought up.

French Park was then the centre of a largely Irish-speaking district, though there is no Irish to be found there now, but in the nineteenth century the atmosphere of the average Church of Ireland rectory was not calculated to foster any strong Gaelic or national spirit, though many an Irish rectory was the origin of men of ability and learning. But Douglas Hyde must always have had an exceptional personality, and did not follow the usual ways of an Irish rector's son. He was never at school except for ten days in Dublin, when he caught measles and returned home to French Park. He owes most of his early schooling to his own love of reading. The only tuition he had was from his father.

Like many of the Irish clergy of that time, Hyde's father was a good scholar, and gave him a grounding in the classics. Hyde's writings show an easy familiarity with both Latin and Greek, but he was no book-worm. He

was, and is an excellent shot, and a good fisherman. In the winter he ranged the bogs for snipe and duck, and in summer was out on Lough Gara, or following the streams around it. Thus he had easy access to the peasants and farmers of the neighbourhood, and broke down the barriers which would naturally have separated a lad of his origin from the country people. The first thing which strikes a stranger on meeting Hyde is his great friendliness, and this quality must have been as strong in his early youth as it is in later life. He was a welcome guest at every fireside, and was treated as a friend, not as the son of a Protestant rector. In most of the cottages which he visited, Gaelic was the language of the old people, so it was through the friendships which he made among the Roscommon peasants that Hyde first became imbued with his love and knowledge of Irish.

A man who taught Hyde much Gaelic was Johnny Lavin, an old Fenian, who was probably sworn into the Fenian Brotherhood by the leader, James Stephens, himself. This is probable, but what is certain is that Lavin rode his horse the thirty miles from French Park to Sligo to meet Stephens. Lavin was a frequent visitor to the kitchen of French Park rectory, where he taught

Hyde to play the popular game of Twenty-five. He was fond of a glass of whiskey, and Hyde used to provide a bottle and a pack of cards and they would spend the winter evenings playing in Irish. Another of Hyde's teachers was a game-keeper called Seumas O'Hart, who was in charge of a bog of Lord de Freyne's, between French Park and Ballaghadereen. The Hydcs had permission to shoot this bog, but it was considered dangerous, so the young Hyde was not allowed out unless O'Hart went with him. O'Hart could speak English, but Irish came more naturally to him. He had a great store of folk tales, was an exceptionally good speaker of Irish, and used sixteenth and seventeenth century words and phrases which had passed out of common speech. Martin O'Brennan, a workman who used to mow for the Hydcs, was also one of those who helped Hyde and told him folk tales.

Even in Hyde's youth Irish was dying fast in the district, and he says that five years made all the difference. In a family the older children would speak Irish as their native language, but those five years younger all spoke English. As an example of the rapid decay of the language, Martin O'Brennan's daughter, who was a maid at the Hydcs, did not speak a word of Irish.

We probably have to thank the attack of measles for much that is admirable in Hyde, because it sent him back to Roscommon and prevented his becoming as anglicised as most Dublin schoolboys. It is perhaps too easy to say that this or that trivial incident was the turning point in a man's life ; in fact it is very difficult to say what made him what he is. Thus Hyde may have felt more eager to revive Gaelic because of his long childhood spent among Gaelic speakers, but he must always have had in him the Gaelic spirit as the master impulse of his nature. We cannot allow a measles germ to claim any important share in the formation of the Gaelic League, though to many of its enemies the rapid spread of the League throughout Ireland must have appeared like the spread of an infectious disease.

To have at once the will and the opportunity is not the lot of every man, so Hyde may consider himself fortunate in that he was given abundant chances to exercise his will to learn Irish. At an early age he knew much about his native country that was in those days denied to those who knew no Irish. The traditional tales of the country, tales of the pagan heroes and of the early Christian saints, which may now be

procured in several different translations, were then practically unknown except to Irish speakers. The average boy of the upper classes went to school in England and learnt nothing about his native country. When he came back to his home for the holidays he was not encouraged to learn anything of the history of the land in which he lived.

Before he came to Trinity College, Hyde must have seen among his neighbours in the country much of the indifferent or hostile spirit of the Irish gentleman to Gaelic. In Trinity he was surrounded by this spirit. Many of his later speeches and writings show that in the University he regarded himself as an alien in a hostile place. One cannot but think that this feeling must have been due largely to the imagination of a youth brought up in semi-isolation from those of his own age. It is impossible for anyone who has met An Craoibhin to believe that he was anything but popular in college. The nature of the man is such as to disarm hostility and to call forth love on all sides. Had he carried on a controversy by letter or set speeches with his fellow undergraduates, he might have been thought a pugnacious fellow, but in college intercourse is not carried on at long ranges, and

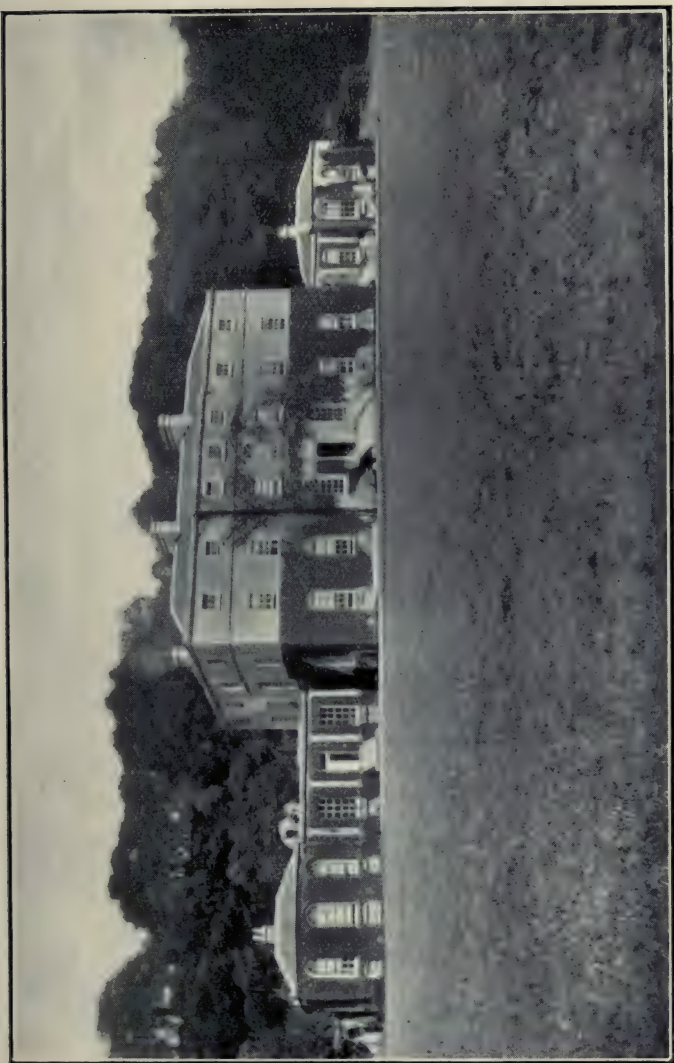
in a hand-to-hand encounter men might disagree with, but could not dislike Hyde. One thing is certain, the hostility of his fellow undergraduates was not enough to upset their sense of justice. He gained the Silver Medal for oratory of the Historical Society in 1887, a distinction which is given solely on the votes of those who listen to the speeches. He also won the Gold Medal for Composition in 1887, and the Gold Medal for History in 1886, seventy-nine years after it had been won by his grandfather, John Oldfield.

Hyde had been a member of the College Historical Society for three years before he ventured to speak in a debate. Then one night the subject of Celt and Saxon was discussed, and a member speaking on the "Saxon" side said that Napoleon was a Celt and that he was defeated by the Saxons. The burden of Hyde's maiden speech was that if Napoleon was a Celt it took the whole of the rest of Europe to subdue one man. His connection with the College Historical Society continued after he had left Trinity, and in 1931 he was elected President of the society in succession to the late Lord Glenavy.

The attitude of the Board of Trinity College

was uncompromisingly hostile to the Irish language, so that Hyde was its enemy from the beginning of his career. Hating the attitude of the governing body of the College, it was natural that he should not have felt at ease under its control. The following story illustrates the attitude of the authorities to his knowledge of Irish. He had to take the prescribed Latin oath to gain permission to read in the College Library. The oath was, as usual, administered by the Provost, Dr. Jellett. When Hyde read out the oath the Provost said : " You learnt your Latin on the Continent ? " " No, sir," said Hyde. " You did," replied the Provost, " or where did you get your pronunciation of Latin ? " " By analogy with Irish," Hyde answered, to which the Provost's only reply was : " Leave the room, sir." Still it must have been hard even for the members of the Board not to be attracted by his personality. In later years the story is told of one of his neighbours in Co. Roscommon, who said to him : " Hyde, I hate your views, but you are a decent fellow." No doubt many of the Fellows of Trinity shared this feeling.

Hyde went to Trinity College with a view to



CASTLE HYDE

taking Orders, and entered the Divinity School, where he won the Elrington prize and passed the examination for a Bachelor of Theology, though he never took out the degree. After a course in this school, he decided that he was not suited for clerical life and abandoned his original intention. He took the Moderatorship course in English Literature and won the large Gold Medal (first of first class honours) in 1884. He subsequently took the degree of Doctor of Laws though he never had any idea of entering the legal profession. He also won the Vice-Chancellor's prize for English verse. His rooms were on the ground floor of No. 24 Trinity College; they are now occupied by the Professor of Irish.

Mr. Crook, who knew him in College, wrote a short sketch of his acquaintance with An Craoibhin at the University. He had known him for some time before he discovered that Hyde knew Irish. In the course of conversation Crook, who was a classical scholar, was struck by Hyde's knowledge of the classics, a knowledge wider, though possibly less minute, than that of the average classical man. He quotes a short conversation :

“ You do know a lot of languages, Hyde. How many do you know? English, German, Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and French, I suppose? ”

“ Yes, and I can read Italian; but the language I know best is Irish.”

“ ‘ Irish ! ’ I exclaimed in astonishment ; ‘ do you know Irish ? ’ ‘ Yes,’ he said quietly, ‘ I dream in Irish.’ ”

It is easy to imagine the astonishment of Mr. Crook, who thought of Irish as a language known by a few Sizars and divinity prizemen, who were as often as not ashamed of their knowledge. He was amazed when Hyde produced a huge bundle of manuscript poems in Irish which he had written. Crook also tells of a conversation Hyde had in Gaelic with a piper of a Scottish regiment whose band was playing at the college races, and of an encounter with a German scholar who had come to Ireland knowing Irish but no English, and who was as astonished as he was disgusted to find that he had to learn English to make himself understood at his hotel.

Such encounters, however, were rare, and at the university Hyde was brought into direct contact with much of the un-Irish side of Irish life. During his first three years in college he

did not meet a single person who knew Irish, or a single Home Ruler until after Gladstone had introduced his first Home Rule Bill.

A short digression is here necessary to explain the words "un-Irish." It was an undoubted fact that in Trinity College the prevailing spirit was intensely Irish of a sort. No one there could imagine he was anywhere but in Ireland; an Englishman was distinctly a foreigner. But there was also a feeling that, though when confronted with a foreigner, the Trinity man was as Irish as possible, still he was generally drawn from a class that in its own country regarded itself as apart from the rest of the land.

The attitude of the class from which the majority of university students came has undergone a great change and the spread of education has opened the university to many who, in Hyde's day, would have found it impossible to enter. At that time Trinity used to be called the "University of the garrison," or an "English outpost in Ireland," and not without justification. Nowadays Trinity takes its place in every branch of the nation's life, and even in Hyde's day the general tone of undergraduate life was in fact Irish, even when it wanted to be English. That it should have wanted to be English was

the fault of an education which excluded all mention of Ireland.

It was against such education that Hyde fought, and rightly ; for how can a man love, respect or serve his country when all he has been taught about her could be written on a single sheet of notepaper ? What there was of un-Irish spirit in Trinity was the result of ignorance. That it was ignorant of its own country was perhaps the most damning thing that could be said of any university.

This un-Irish spirit was not confined to Trinity ; all over the country there was a depth of ignorance about Ireland and Irish that could hardly be paralleled in any other land. Education was probably the root of the whole matter. Hyde, with exceptional insight, saw the full significance of this, and determined to do what he could to redress it ; but it is better to leave the consideration of this to a later chapter. It is only brought in here to show the nature of the influence of Trinity College on Hyde's outlook. He must have felt like a young Hercules when he looked at the Augean stable of ignorance which had to be cleared if he were to reach the foundation on which Gaelic Ireland had been

built, and on which any native Irish revival must be erected.

Soon after graduating Hyde went to Canada to teach English literature in the State University of New Brunswick, as locum-tenens for his friend, Mr. W. F. Stockley, the well-known Professor of University College, Cork. He did not stay long in Canada, though he liked the land, but returned to Ireland in less than a year. One poem of his about Canada gives his feelings towards that great country. There are four stanzas, but the last two give the spirit of the poem :

The ravaging winter is over,
The Wizard of Silence is fled,
And violets peep from their cover,
And daisies are raising their head.
Earth blushes to life like a lover,
And wakes in her emerald bed,
And she and the heavens above her
In torrents of sunshine are wed,
Forgetting the swoon of the snow.

By the pole slope that Canada faces
The ice giants hurtle and reel,
For her seven months winter she cases
Her land in a casket of steel.

Yet I pine for her mighty embraces
In the home of the moose and the seal,
And I pine for her beautiful places
And sad is the feeling I feel
When snowflakes remind me of her.

The words about "her seven months winter" brought down on his head much comical wrath from the Canadians, but the poem was reprinted in many of their papers.

While in Canada Hyde made a study of the Red Indians, especially the Melicites. He learnt much of their customs and folk-lore. But the best known relic of his sojourn in Canada is a photograph in a fur cap, which has more often been reproduced than any other portrait of this much photographed man.

Soon after he returned to Ireland his aunts, the Miss Oldfields, introduced him to Miss Lucy Kurtz, a charming young woman whom they had met during a holiday at Killarney, and they became engaged and were married within the year. Miss Kurtz was a member of a distinguished Wurtemberg family which had been ennobled by the Emperor Charles V in the sixteenth century. The family had moved to Russia where they were strong adherents of the Czar Nicholas, who was murdered by his officers

in 1801 for attempting to liberate the serfs. Miss Kurtz's great-uncle and her father, Charles, then a lad, left Odessa and came to England in 1815. They were distinguished research chemists and made a large fortune which they devoted largely to the collection of works of art. When Mr. Charles Kurtz died in 1880 his pictures, valued at over £27,000, were dispersed. Miss Kurtz's mother was Miss Hill, the daughter of an English West Indian planter of good family.

Though previous to her marriage she had no connection with Ireland, Mrs. Hyde has always been the greatest strength and stay to her husband. She was never a Gael; her contribution to Hyde's success was that of the cool critic who helped him to come to the right judgment in time of crisis. It is no exaggeration to say that without her help he could not have survived the strain of his years of struggle.

They had two daughters; the elder, Nuala, died in 1912, just as she was beginning to show promise as a writer. The second, Una, is married to James Sealy, Judge of the Circuit Court.

CHAPTER II.

THE IRISH LANGUAGE.

THE English Government in Ireland had from its earliest days done its utmost to suppress the Irish language.

This was but part of a general scheme to anglicise Ireland. Everything which distinguished the Irish from their conquerors was proscribed. Language, dress, and customs alike were forbidden. English settlers were poured into the country, but when they arrived they rapidly adopted the native habits and language. Laws were passed forbidding the immigrants from marrying or even holding intercourse with the Irish, but all these laws were of no avail. After a couple of generations there was hardly a family of planters but had lost every trace of its English origin.

Though the efforts of the Government did not succeed in killing the spoken tongue, they



MRS. HYDE

were effectual in disturbing the life of the country. Though even the sons of the English settlers spoke Irish they were not in a position to set up permanent schools and colleges in Ireland. Such seats of learning as the Irish had were always liable to be dispersed. Hence it followed that there was little printed matter in the Irish tongue. Practically all Irish books were in manuscript, and though there were many thousands of manuscripts and copies of manuscripts in Ireland, the greater number of which have been lost or destroyed, there can have been comparatively few copies compared to the number of printed books in Latin and English.

As Hyde puts it in his *Literary History of Ireland* (page 534) :

“ The Irish, having no press of their own in Ireland (though they had some outside it), were obliged to print and set up all their books abroad, chiefly at Louvain, Antwerp, Rome and Paris. Any attempts to introduce founts of Irish type in the teeth of the English Government would, I think, have been futile, so that, except for the works she was able to print in Irish type abroad, and afterwards smuggle in, Ireland during the seventeenth century was thrown nearly a couple of hundred years out of the world's course, by having to use manuscripts instead of printed books.”

The first fount of Irish type in Ireland was made at Queen Elizabeth's order, and a small Irish grammar was printed for her. The first Irish printing, on a large scale, was the translation of the Scriptures by Bishops Daniel and Bedell. Thus printing in Irish was early associated with proselytising; there was no chance for the native literature to see the light in printed form in Ireland.

As learning formed but a small part of the education of a gentleman in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the majority of the Irish gentlemen, though they spoke Irish, did not make any effort to have books printed for themselves. The small number of the Anglo-Irish and those of the Irish who had come under their influence, who took any interest in books, were contented to read Latin or English. The native Irish still had traditions of learning, but the devastating wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made it difficult for any Irishman to publish books.

There was a revival of learning in Ireland at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Keating's *History* and the *Annals of the Four Masters*, two of the most important historical works written in Ireland, were compiled. There

was also a revival of poetry, but it was nearly all in manuscript, and not printed until a much later date. Many of the manuscripts perished before their contents could be saved.

In the governing of Ireland from Dublin, English was the language used, though in Dublin itself Irish was very commonly spoken. Practically the whole staff of permanent officials were English. A strenuous effort was made to anglicise the heads of important Irish families. Thus Hugh O'Neill was educated as a hostage in England. He lived to be one of the greatest of Irish leaders, but he had first to learn Irish, which he had almost forgotten. The great Duke of Ormond was also educated in England, and never spoke Irish with ease, though he could understand it.

When the Irish and Anglo-Irish chiefs assembled in 1642 at the Confederation of Kilkenny, both Irish and English seem to have been used indifferently. Many of the members, for example, Conor Maguire, Bishop of Clogher, could not speak English with ease; but it is noticeable that Castlehaven, an Englishman, makes no mention in his memoirs of finding it difficult to make himself understood, or indeed of the Irish language at all. This may have been

because Irish was so accepted a tongue that it was not necessary to mention it. All the printing done for the confederation was in English. Rinnucini, the Papal Nuncio, mentions that he spoke and was spoken to in Latin, but some of his staff learned Gaelic.

Though Irish was much spoken by all classes in Ireland up to the middle of the seventeenth century, the invasion of Cromwellite and Williamite planters and adventurers soon altered this. A great proportion of the old landowners were dispossessed of their property and English and Scottish settlers put in their place. Irish speaking ceased among the upper classes until, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was the rare exception for a member of them to know Irish.

Still, Irish was the tongue of the majority of the population, though a large number of the Irish speakers could speak some English also. It is in the last century that the great decay in the Irish language took place. This must be ascribed in a measure to Daniel O'Connell. The great democrat never realised the importance of Irish to Ireland. He himself was born and brought up in a district where Irish is still freely spoken. He spoke to audiences,

nine-tenths of whom were accustomed to speak Irish as their language of daily intercourse. He could have carried on his whole movement for Catholic Emancipation in Irish had he chosen to do so. But he did not. Though on a few occasions he spoke in Irish, he chose not to give a Gaelic trend to Irish thought. He perhaps regarded English as the more aristocratic language, but it should be remembered that he was speaking more for the general public and the press than for the audience before him.

Except Davis, the men of the Young Ireland movement took small interest in Gaelic. Mangan, it is true, adapted some Gaelic poems into English, but he himself did not know Gaelic and simply wrote adaptations of Irish poems translated to him word for word by John O'Daly and perhaps O'Curry.

Thomas Davis, on the other hand, was one of the first to realise the importance of Gaelic to Ireland. In his essay, "Our National Language," he wrote :

"What business has the Russian for the rippling language of Italy or India? How could the Greek distort his organs and his soul to speak Dutch upon the sides of Hymettus or the Head of Salamis, or on the waste where once was Sparta? And is it

befitting the fiery, delicate-organed Celt to abandon his beautiful tongue, docile and spirited as an Arab, 'sweet as music, strong as the wave'—is it befitting to him to abandon this wild liquid speech for the mongrel of a hundred breeds called English, which, powerful though it be, creaks and bangs about the Celt who tries to use it?

"A people without a language of its own is only half a nation. A nation should guard its language more than its territories—'tis a surer barrier, and more important frontier, than fortress or river. . . .

"What! give up the tongue of Ollamh Fodhla and Brian Boru, the tongue of McCarthy and of the O'Nials, the tongue of Sarsfield's, Curran's, Mathew's and O'Connell's boyhood, for that of Strafford and Poynings, Sussex, Kirk and Cromwell!

"No, oh no! the 'brighter days shall surely come' and the green flag shall wave on our towers, and the sweet old language be heard once more in college, mart and senate."

Davis went on to advocate bilingual newspapers and the teaching of Irish in the schools of the Irish-speaking parts, in his day a very large proportion of the country. But the brightest spirit of the Young Ireland movement did not live to continue his teaching. His followers were many, but they seem to have missed this side of his teaching. The "young husbandman of

Erin's fruitful seed time " was taken from his country before he could do more than scatter the first seeds of his creed of nationality, and some of them fell on barren ground.

The Fenians who organised the next revolution in Ireland had among their leaders men who knew and spoke Irish. O'Donovan Rossa and John O'Mahony were both keen Gaels, but they did little or nothing to foster the language through their organisation, which was purely military in character. It is said that there was a Fenian handbook of pike drill printed in Irish, but if so it seems to have perished completely. No copy is known to exist to-day.

It is curious that the revolutionary bodies in Ireland did not make more use of Gaelic, as until the middle of the nineteenth century it was generally spoken in most counties in Ireland. Except by Davis, the value of a language as a national asset seems not to have been thought of even by the most intelligent persons.

Neglected and despised by those who should naturally be expected to foster it, the Irish language was attacked in the most ruthless manner by the system of teaching introduced into Ireland under the control of the " Board of National Education," a body in whose title the

word " Board " was the only appropriate one. Its definite policy was to stamp out any tendency towards nationalism among the children under its charge and, if possible, to make them consider themselves as English. The extremes to which the Board went are well illustrated by their proscribing Scott's—

“ Breathes there a man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land ! ”

as being too national in spirit to be permitted in the Irish schools, and substituting for it lines written for the occasion by Archbishop Whatley, a member of the Board—

“ I thank the goodness and the grace
That on my birth has smiled,
And made me in these Christian days
A happy English child.”

The schools controlled by this Board were spread all over Ireland, and formed the only means of education possible to the unfortunate Irish peasant. In the " National Schools " children were beaten for speaking Irish. They were taught to despise and hate their native language, and their parents, never taught to

value it themselves, looked on the introduction of English and the destruction of Irish as a sign of progress and culture. In some schools a stick, called a "signum," was tied to a string round the child's neck, and the parents were expected to cut a notch in it for every word of Irish the child spoke at home. Next day on coming to school the notches were counted and the child given a beating proportionate to the number of notches. The late Cardinal Logue stated that he remembered this system in use. Honour should be given to the memory of Archbishop McHale, who would not allow the National School system into his diocese because it was inimical to the Irish language. But what can one man, even an Archbishop, do, unsupported by public opinion?

The Irish language, attacked by every weapon at the disposal of the Government, and unsupported by those to whom it should have looked for protection, was rapidly dying. In the half century from 1840 to 1890 it was reduced from the general tongue of the country people to that of a few poor peasants in remote parts of the land.

A mine of historical and literary treasures was lost to Ireland with the decay of her language.

There are rich remains of all ages, from the fifth century of this era, down to the last century, but these can only be a tithe of what might have been preserved. It is not possible to throw the whole blame for this loss on the English Government. The Government undoubtedly had the will to destroy every vestige of Irish civilisation and literature, but if the Irish people themselves had stood by their language as they stood by their faith it would have been impossible for any Government to destroy it. But the value of a language to a nation was not appreciated until recent years. It was not appreciated by the mass of Irishmen until the very end of the nineteenth century. How they came to appreciate it is the history of An Craoibhin.

* * * * *

There had, it is true, been societies devoted to the study of the Irish language, from a purely scholarly point of view, long before the movement for the revival of Irish as a spoken language. It would be ungrateful not to give some slight sketch of these societies which undoubtedly did some good work in the way of publishing Irish manuscripts.

In the early part of the nineteenth century

several short-lived societies were formed for the purpose of publishing Irish texts—which only produced a volume or two each. The Archæological Society, founded in 1840, was more lasting and produced a number of valuable works of scholarship, chiefly the work of John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry. In 1853 the Ossianic Society was formed for a similar purpose. These societies were supported by wealthy patrons of learning and did not touch the life of the people.

It is interesting that Mr. Smith O'Brien, on his return from exile, though he had seen the failure of his hopes for Ireland, saw in the language a means of serving his country. Urged by O'Donovan, he learned Irish and became president of the Ossianic Society. But though Smith O'Brien learned to speak and write Irish, the Ossianic Society, or the other smaller societies formed for similar purposes, did not attempt to preserve or help the spoken language of Ireland. It was considered enough to edit and publish manuscripts.

The first society formed for the purpose of saving the spoken language was the "Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language," founded in 1876. The early members of this

Society included Father John Nolan, David Comyn, and T. O'Neill Russell. Both Cardinal Logue and Archbishop Walsh were supporters of the Society.

This Society did a great deal of hard work for the Irish language, and actually succeeded in inducing the Boards of National and Intermediate Education to put Irish on their programmes in 1878, the year Hyde joined the Society.

A fee of 10s. was allowed for each Pass in Irish, and some of the enthusiasts of that day thought that they saw the beginning of the revival of the language. Why did nothing come of all this? When the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language seemed to be in a fair way to achieve something, dissensions arose and there was a sharp division among its members. In 1878, when the dissensions came to such a pitch that the members were no longer able to work together, a number seceded and formed a new society called the Gaelic Union.

The seceders included the most active and energetic members—Father Nolan, David Comyn, O'Neill Russell, and Hyde. The new Gaelic Union gave its whole attention to Modern Irish, so that perhaps it more deserved the title of

“ Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language ” than did the Society of that name.

The years 1878 to 1893 were not the most favourable for starting a new society. Ireland was torn by a bitter political struggle. The time of the Land League, the Home Rule Bills, and the Parnell split was not a time when men could give their attention to the Irish language, which must then have seemed of small importance to all but the most far-sighted.

The members of the Gaelic Union, despite the unpropitious times, were able to do some good work. Amongst other things they started a monthly magazine called the *Gaelic Journal*, the first periodical paper printed in Irish, which was of much service in the work of providing accessible literature for those who wished to learn Irish, and an opportunity for those who wrote it to publish their writings. The *Gaelic Journal* had a hard struggle to keep alive, and could never have done so without the help of a few subscribers, principal among whom was the Rev. Maxwell Close.

Mr. Close was one of the most disinterested of Irishmen, and one who always shunned any public recognition of his works. He was a rich man, and devoted the whole of his time and

money to serving the interests of his country. As well as being a scholar and deeply interested in the literature of his country, he was a distinguished astronomer and geologist. Without his help the *Gaelic Journal* would have come to an end many years before it did, and much Irish literature that is now accessible would not have been published. His efforts for the Irish language did not terminate with his life, for the Irish Dictionary which is being slowly published by the Royal Irish Academy is partly paid for from a legacy left by him for this purpose.

When the struggle over the Home Rule Bill and Parnell had subsided, there came a period of calm over Irish affairs, but by this time the Gaelic Union had become moribund, though its organ, the *Gaelic Journal*, was still doing good work. It had never had any great popular appeal, and though it had assisted in getting Irish put on to the programme of the Board of National Education, it had not succeeded in rousing enthusiasm in the country. True, over a hundred students qualified in Irish in one year, but the movement was still small, and Hyde and those who worked with him thought it better to start a new organisation rather than to try to galvanise the dying Union into life. Hyde himself

was full of energy and had the capacity for imparting his enthusiasm to large crowds. His oratory was of the kind that could awaken a sleepy audience like a draught of fresh air, his programme one which appealed to the young and enthusiastic. He was the very man to originate a popular movement. Thus the Gaelic League began.

In the eighties of the nineteenth century the Irish language seemed at its last gasp, and few would have prophesied that it could outlive the century except in the mouths of a very few old folk. Irishmen watched its decline with indifference born of ignorance.

For a century or more the chief teaching or publishing in Modern Gaelic had been the work of proselytising societies. The Roman Catholic population of Ireland had therefore been taught to look with the greatest suspicion on strangers who attempted to learn their language, a suspicion which died slowly. No attempt was made to revive the dying tongue, except among a few dilettantes.

When Hyde came to Dublin he saw that such work would not lead to anything beyond mere scholarship, and that the only way to stay the decay of the language was to arouse a general

feeling for Irish as Irish, and to teach Irishmen that the language was an essential part of their nationality. With this idea he started a campaign of education in the country which produced a great educational revolution. Travelling over Ireland from Cork to Belfast and from Dublin to Westport, he held a series of meetings. He found individuals everywhere whose enthusiasm was easily aroused, who had implanted in them the instincts of the language and the race so strongly that they only needed a suggestion to make them see all that the Irish language meant to Ireland. These people flocked to meet Hyde, and he taught them the paramount importance of preserving their tongue. Enthusiasts, fired by his example and teaching, carried on the movement. In all parts of the country small bodies gathered together to teach Ireland that she was losing with her language not only a means of national expression but one of the very essentials of her nationality. The Irish were not long in learning the lesson. They had lost their language through ignorance, and that only for a generation or two ; when they learned its importance in national life they set to work to undo the evil of their neglect.

As the idea of preserving the Irish tongue

spread through the country every kind of man seemed to see in the revival of the language a means of furthering his own particular national aspiration ; and he saw rightly, inasmuch as the Irish Language movement helped on every other movement for the good of Ireland. It aroused men to a new interest in their own land and, even apart from the language, brought many benefits in its train.

Thus, the philologist saw in the language a very highly developed tongue capable of expressing the nicest shades of meaning ; the socialist, the bringing forward of ideas in which all Irishmen had an equal heritage ; the aristocrat remembered the high chivalry of the Irish chiefs ; the religious mind thought of the countless saints of Ireland ; the youths and maidens thought of the revival of Irish national life, with its dances and songs ; and even the toper could rejoice at the descriptions of old Irish banquets, and hope that in a re-Gaelicised Ireland the ale and mead would circulate freely. Music, too, smiled on the Irish revival ; the Irish pipes, sweeter in tone than the war pipes of the Scottish Highlands, were once again heard with pleasure in parts of the country where they had almost been forgotten. Old airs and songs were

collected. Irish melodies and songs have done much to revive the popular interest in Irish.

In brief, all the finer elements of the Irish character were drawn out by the Gaelic movement ; the life of the country seemed quickened afresh. With the language came a new interest in all things Irish. A new outlet was opened for the development of nationality, which had suffered a check in the collapse of the Parnell movement. The political movement associated with Parnell having become intimately connected with the agrarian question, had, to some extent, deadened men's minds on the purely intellectual side.

At this dead period the Gaelic League opened up a new avenue of national thought more purely intellectual and less political than any in the history of the country. It was at this point that Hyde first became intimately and publicly associated with Irish ideals.

Once started, the movement caught the imagination of the country, and in a short time the ideals of the Gaelic League—Hyde's ideals—began to make themselves felt in every branch of life.

In the winter of 1892, the winter before the Gaelic League was founded, Hyde delivered a

lecture to the National Literary Society, of which he was president, which is especially interesting as expressing his views at the very beginning of his great campaign for the revival of Irish.

As has been seen, Ireland had never shown such clear signs of losing her national individuality as she did in the later half of the nineteenth century, when the great effort to "de-anglicise" Ireland and to stop the rapid decline of Irish life and thought was nearing its birth. It is thus that Hyde speaks of it :

"When we speak of the necessity for de-anglicising the Irish Nation we mean it, not as a protest against imitating what is best in the English people, for that would be absurd, but rather to show the folly of neglecting what is Irish and hastening to adopt pell-mell and indiscriminately everything that is English simply because it is English."

This has always remained Hyde's guiding principle. Some of his followers have gone further and advocated the rejection of every English idea, good or bad. Such an extreme attitude was naturally to be expected among men struggling against the apparently overwhelming force of anglicisation, but time brings its adjust-

ments and Hyde's balanced view should prevail. He himself, although an enthusiast by nature, was never a fanatic. His sense of humour was always too strong to allow him to lose his sense of proportion.

The next important part of his lecture dealt with the educational system of the country and its effect upon the people. He said :

“ If we take a bird's-eye view of our island to-day and compare it with what it used to be, we must be struck by the extraordinary fact that that nation which was once, as everyone admits, one of the most classically learned and cultured nations in Europe, is now one of the least so; how one of the most reading and literary peoples has become one of the least studious and most unliterary, and how the artistic products of one of the quickest, most sensitive, and most artistic races on earth are now only distinguished for their hideousness. I shall endeavour to show that this failure of the Irish people in recent times has been largely brought about by the race diverging during this century from the right path and ceasing to become Irish without becoming English.”

Hyde then proceeded to point out what Ireland had lost by giving up her Irish characteristics, names, customs, games, and language,

and how this had brought her down in character and had almost made her cease to be a nation. "I wish to show you," he said, "that in anglicising ourselves wholesale we have thrown away with a light heart the best claim which we have upon the world's recognition of us as a separate nation." He showed, what is commonplace knowledge to Irishmen, that they do not make good Englishmen. They are prepared to adopt some of the habits of Englishmen without becoming English. "They always stop half-way on the road."

"But you ask," he continues, "why should we want to make Ireland more Celtic than it is—why should we de-anglicise it at all?"

"I answer, because the Irish race is at present in a most anomalous position, imitating England and yet hating it. How can it produce anything good in literature, art or institutions as long as it is actuated by motives so contradictory! Besides, it is our own Gaelic past which, though the Irish race does not recognise it, is really at the bottom of the Irish heart and prevents us becoming citizens of the Empire."

Hyde then referred to the way in which Ireland absorbed layer upon layer of invaders, Danes, Normans, Saxons, and yet preserved

her national characteristics and life and gave her language almost unaltered to thousands upon thousands of strangers. The Irish people resisted all these attacks upon their nationality.

“ But, alas, *quantum mutatus ab illo!* What the battle-axe of the Dane, the sword of the Norman, the wile of the Saxon were unable to perform we have accomplished ourselves. We have at last broken the continuity of Irish life; and just at the moment when the Celtic race is presumably about to largely recover possession of its own country it finds itself deprived and stript of its Celtic characteristics, cut off from the past yet scarcely in touch with the present. It has lost since the beginning of this century almost all that connected it with the era of Cuchulain and of Ossian, that connected it with the Christianisers of Europe. . . .

“ It has lost all that they had in language, traditions, music, genius and ideas. Just when we should be starting to build up anew the Irish race and Gaelic nation—as within our own recollections Greece has been built up anew—we find ourselves despoiled of the bricks of nationality. The old bricks that lasted eighteen hundred years destroyed, we must now set to make new ones if we can on other ground and of other clay. Imagine for a moment the restoration of a German-speaking Greece! ”

These quotations from Hyde's lecture in 1892 show the ideas which filled his mind just when the Gaelic League was about to start its work of reviving Irish language and traditions.

To-day his views are unaltered. Much has been done towards realising his ideals, more remains to be done ; but Hyde has been given the pleasure of seeing, in a measure at least, his work bearing fruit.

Now under a national Government Irish has taken its full place—some say more than its place—in the educational programme. How far the efforts being made to make Ireland again an Irish-speaking country can succeed remains to be seen, but now it is the rare exception for a school child not to know a good deal of Irish, and many know it so well that their whole education is given through the medium of Gaelic.

CHAPTER III.

FOUNDING THE GAELIC LEAGUE.

IN the early nineties of the last century political feeling reached a high pitch of intensity. Irishmen of different political views found it difficult to work together for any object. "Felons and gaolbirds" were words flung freely at the Home Rule Party, which had just come through the fiercest struggle of the "Plan of Campaign"; "traitors and parasites" were the replies of the Nationalists. Internal strife rent the Nationalist Party. Parnellites and Healyites were at each other's throats.

A debating club called the "Contemporary Club" had been started in Dublin, largely by graduates of Trinity College, with the object of exchanging views on Irish problems. The club was formed of equal numbers of Unionists and Nationalists, and members were only admitted in pairs, but this was soon found to be a failure. Before long the members of one political party

ceased to attend. After some years a solitary Unionist remained to show what the club had once been.

Many of Hyde's Trinity friends were members of the Contemporary Club, and he was closely in touch with the life of Dublin at that period. He saw the evils wrought by political hatred poisoning every form of national effort. He saw every attempt to improve conditions of life in Ireland made into a political move of one party or the other. He, therefore, determined that he would do his best to keep the movement for the revival of the Irish language free from all political colour.

In this he had the support of MacNeill and his other colleagues. The Gaelic League was started as a body, to preserve and revive the Irish language, literature, music, dancing, and games, to encourage Irish art and industries, and was declared to be non-political and non-sectarian. The effort to start the Gaelic League as a non-political and non-sectarian body (a phrase which has been run to death in Ireland) succeeded beyond all expectations. Disgust at the malice which seemed to pervade the political life of the country made men of good feeling welcome a chance of meeting on a neutral

ground which still was Irish. Though no doubt the vast majority of those who wished to revive the Irish language were Nationalists of one shade or another, a considerable number of Unionists also joined the League, either from linguistic motives, or because they saw in the Gaelic League a means of meeting their Nationalist compatriots without compromising their politics. The speeches and writings of Hyde and the other leaders of the movement were all moderate in tone, and repeatedly insisted that the Gaelic League was not associated with any political organisation. They welcomed into the Gaelic League all who had any interest in a distinctively Irish culture, and their appeal met with a good response. Men's minds, numbed by the political strife of the previous decade, revived to an interest in the intellectual as apart from the political life of their country. It was in this spirit that quite a large number of Unionists sympathised with the objects of the League. That body of Unionist opinion which, while upholding the principle of union with England for economic reasons, still held that Ireland was a nation, was decidedly sympathetic to the Gaelic movement. Such Unionists were especially welcomed by the

Gaelic League, which aimed at being an all-Ireland movement, wholly Irish, and rejecting nothing that was Irish.

To the distress of those Unionists who had no sympathy with the Gaelic League, it was soon found that no sooner did a Unionist come into close contact with the movement than his unionism began to weaken. This was the result of gaining a more intimate knowledge of the Irish people and from reading Irish history. Lecky's *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, a book which is said to have made a Home Ruler of nearly everyone who read it except its author, formed a groundwork on which a knowledge of Irish history was based. The Gaelic League in encouraging the study of Irish history brought many to read that book, the standard work on the later period of the history of Ireland. The result was that a number of Unionists became Home Rulers. This, of course, caused a great fluttering in the Unionist dovecotes, especially in the North of Ireland. The Gaelic League was looked upon as one of the most insidious weapons of the Nationalists. Any attempt to introduce the teaching of Irish was regarded as "the thin end of the wedge." It was further looked on as a weapon for the

destruction of Protestantism. One who saw in the Gaelic League the direct instrument of Satan in the overthrow of religion, wrote to the *Derry Sentinel* :—

“ It will be hardly necessary to warn Protestant Loyalists against the soft-soaping efforts of individuals . . . championing the society known as the Gaelic League . . . The short and the long of the whole matter is that the Gaelic League and its kindred societies are all covered with the same coat of Home Rule tar and are at the bottom little better than Fenian; any unwary Protestant getting mixed up with them being played as a decoy duck for all he is worth.”

Another, writing in the same paper, said that the Gaelic League was a society for “ the wholesale desecration of the Lord’s Day,” and ended, “ let all good men and true repeat the words of the prayer, ‘ Good Lord, deliver us from all these abominations.’ ”

No doubt these men were right in their fears. The learning of Irish undoubtedly had the effect of making Unionists waver in their convictions; and since the majority of Gaelic Leaguers were busy all the week, and belonged to a Church which does not insist on strict sabbatarianism, Sunday was the usual day for Gaelic meetings

and games. (Irish Protestants were usually extremely Low Church in their religious views.)

It was natural that the political party which based its doctrines on the English connection should be suspicious of a movement which aimed at preserving Irish characteristics. Undoubtedly an element in the Unionist Party wished to make Ireland into a glorified English county, and took their views of life altogether from England. But there were large numbers of Unionists who were thoroughly Irish in feeling.

Thus, though politics were kept out of the League to a wonderful extent, it was from the beginning opposed by the more violent members of one political party.

The Nationalist politicians, on the other hand, did not trust a movement professedly non-political. "Non-political" movements in Ireland have generally meant movements designed to wean the people from politics into an apathetic acquiescence in the state of things as they are. "Give up thinking about Home Rule and give your attention to this," had been the catchword of many a man who wanted to break up the Nationalist Party.

Though the official Nationalists dreaded a movement which had "No Politics" as its

watchword, it was soon found that the League did not attempt to interfere with any man's politics or to stop men, other than officials of the Gaelic League acting on the League's business, from being as political as they liked on either side.

An Orangeman was as welcome to the League as a Fenian, and no one tried to convert either. Of course the number of Orangemen who were members was very small; in fact only one prominent Orangeman joined.

The League attracted to its ranks many persons who were or who afterwards became prominent in the political and industrial life of the country though not associated with any bigoted party views. Lord Castletown and The O'Connor Don both took some part in Gaelic League propaganda, and Capt. the Hon. Otway Cuffe did as much as one man could do to further it in Kilkenny, where, helped by his sister-in-law, Ellen Lady Desert, he founded a number of industries, and by means of lectures and plays awakened a new interest in Ireland in that city. His early death was a great loss to Ireland and to the Gaelic movement. Lady Desert carried on his work, especially on its industrial side. She was not interrupted in this either by the war or

by the political changes which followed it. She was nominated as a member of the Senate of the Irish Free State, and though never a politician, took an active part in its work up to her death in 1933.

The Nationalist Party found that the Irish revival had behind it the sympathy of Ireland, and that the Gaelic League was spreading rapidly over the country. Many members of the party were Gaelic Leaguers, and soon the distrust of the official Nationalists for the League was conquered. Several members of the party took an active interest in the movement, and one made a speech in Irish in Parliament, to the astonishment of the English members, who took prompt measures to prevent a repetition of the outrage. The leaders of the party, though not very enthusiastic supporters of the Gaelic movement, gave it some aid, and both Redmond and Dillon occasionally appeared on Gaelic League platforms. Both in the House of Commons and outside they worked to safeguard the interests of the language in Irish education, and with the exception of a difference of opinion on Dillon's part on the question of compulsory Irish in the National University, they consistently continued to give it their support. Redmond, at a St.

Patrick's Day dinner in London in 1904, publicly asked Hyde to take a seat in Parliament, an offer which was appreciated but declined. Hyde thought that it was not good policy on Redmond's part to offer him the seat. The non-political character of the Gaelic League was a thing on which Hyde had so much insisted that he would have had to resign from his position in it had he accepted membership of the Parliamentary party. There were already signs that there was at least a section of the Gaelic League which would have liked to use it for political ends other than those of the Parliamentary Party.

During the period in which the Gaelic League was founded and grew to strength the political situation in Ireland was one of growing calm. There were, it is true, divergencies of opinion in the Nationalist ranks where O'Brien and Healy contested the leadership with Redmond, but the general trend was to consolidate Nationalist opinion round Redmond. The Unionist Party continued its opposition to Home Rule, but here also party feeling was dying down and the bitterness which had existed between Unionists and Nationalists was becoming less marked. This was the period from 1893 to 1913.

It was in 1893, while party feeling was still at its bitterest, that the Gaelic League was founded. The first meeting was held on the 31st July, 1893. Hyde was in the chair, and among the others present were : Patrick Hogan, Eoin MacNeill, Padraic O'Brien, T. O'Neill Russell, and Father William Hayden, S.J. Unlike all the previous societies which were single bodies working in Dublin, the Gaelic League was to be nation-wide. It was not to hold meetings in Dublin to which enthusiasts from the country might come, but it was to go down into the country and form branches wherever a nucleus of people with Gaelic ideas could be found. The central body of the League was important ; for some time " The Central Branch " practically was the League, but as time went on it was the branches which became the most important part of the organisation, and the Coiste Gnótha, or Executive Committee, was subordinate not only in theory but in practice to the opinion of the branches as a whole.

Hyde travelled from town to village and from village to town, speaking, meeting committees, and interviewing priests, teachers, public men of all kinds, and above all, groups of young men and women. Other members of the original

committee did likewise, and soon branches began to spring up all over the country until, by 1908, they numbered no less than 550. This was the peak year of the Gaelic League, the year in which the National University was founded.

Wherever there was a branch of the League there was an Irish teacher, for it was a condition of affiliation that each branch had to have a certain number of members attending classes in Irish. Besides the Irish classes, branches of the Gaelic League organised plays in Gaelic, classes for step and figure dancing, and lectures on subjects of Irish interest. In addition to the activities of individual branches, local "feiseanna" or festivals were held, at which were competitions in Irish speaking, dancing, story-telling, singing, piping and fiddling. Such competitions were not confined to the young, for in story-telling and musical competitions it was not uncommon to have very old competitors. In districts where Irish had died out among the young, the old people found themselves dragged forward and praised for speaking a language which as children they had been taught to regard as a mark of inferiority.

Each branch elected a representative to a central assembly called the Ard Fheis, or High

Assembly, which met once a year and dealt with subjects of general interest to the League. The Ard Fheis also elected a president and Coiste Gnótha, or Executive Committee, to manage the affairs of the League. Hyde was unanimously elected president each year from the foundation of the League until his resignation in 1915. In some cases there were district committees called Coiste Ceanntair, which in large towns such as Dublin had some control in local affairs.

By means of the Ard Fheis every branch was kept in touch with the whole organisation and was able to compare its work with the work of other districts. At the time of holding the Ard Fheis it was usual to hold competitions and games; the Oireachtas,* as the festival was called, usually lasted for several days and thus gave Gaelic Leaguers from the extreme ends of Ireland an opportunity of meeting one another. On the whole the organisation worked well, though there was a section in favour of more local control and the establishment of County Committees. County committees existed in some counties, and in Ulster there was a body

* The word "Oireachtas," which means "assembly," is now almost exclusively used for the Parliament.

called the Dáil Uladh, which, though not officially connected with the League, exercised an efficient control over the teaching of Irish in that province.

A description of a typical branch of the Gaelic League would be as follows: There were from fifty to three hundred members of all ages, from seven to seventy, and from all strata in society. The branch, if rich, had a house or several rooms of its own where its meetings and classes were held; if poor, it met in the local schoolhouse or hall.

The most important matter was the teaching of the Irish language. This was divided into three or four classes, each meeting once or twice a week. The classes might have from ten to a hundred pupils, and here the extremes of age and youth often met. It was not at all rare to see old men and women working beside boys and girls. The spirit of the class was very democratic, and the teacher, having no authority over his or her pupils, was obliged to rule by tact alone. In the beginning of the League the textbooks of Father O'Growney were universally used, but more modern methods came in directed to producing fluency in speaking.

Besides the classes there were céilidhthe. A

céilidh was a sort of evening entertainment, including dancing, singing and recitations. At céilidh the only native Irish dances were permitted. These dances were all either step or figure dances. As a result the number of single performances at a céilidh was large as compared with the number of dances. The step dancing was often very good, but the figure dances were the more amusing. These dances with their picturesque names, such as "The Waves of Tory," "The Bridge of Athlone," or "The Walls of Limerick," are easy to learn after a fashion, but they are sometimes complicated, and then there is both confusion and amusement when there are several beginners dancing. Step dancing is individual in character and much more difficult.

The céilidh formed one of the best features of the Gaelic League. They brought people together as no other form of amusement in Ireland could do. They were free from ostentation or vulgarity, and were one of the few means of bringing variety and liveliness into the lives of the great mass of the people.

Besides the céilidh, there was the open-air excursion, or "turas," when all members of the branch were invited to go to some place of

interest or beauty. The turas sometimes ended with a céilidh in the open air.

Thus a branch of the Gaelic League formed itself into a social as well as an intellectual centre. It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of the part played by the League in the smaller country towns, where before the advent of the cinematograph other means of amusement were practically unknown.

A characteristic of the Gaelic movement was its insistence on temperance. No strong liquors were supplied at feis or céilidh. So strong was the temperance movement among Gaelic leaders that in 1903, by their influence on public opinion, they succeeded in inducing most of the public-houses in Dublin to close on St. Patrick's Day, which was not then an official public holiday. When through the efforts of the Gaelic League St. Patrick's Day was made into a public holiday in Ireland by Act of Parliament an offer was made to include the closing of public-houses in the Act. This offer was refused on the grounds that it was preferable to have them closed voluntarily. By subsequent Act of the Irish Free State they are now closed by law.

In addition to the branches of the Gaelic League there was a separate organisation known

as the Summer Colleges, not directly controlled by the Gaelic League, but intimately connected with the Gaelic movement. These colleges were curiously like what an Irish university of the seventh or eighth centuries must have been. They were usually in a wild part of the country, planted in the midst of an Irish-speaking population. The "college" consisted of a schoolhouse with one or more classrooms. The students lived in the cottages surrounding the "college." They had thus the double advantage of hearing Irish spoken at all times of the day as the usual medium of intercourse and of getting lectures on the language, grammar, and poetry. The lectures were nearly always in Gaelic, as all the colleges taught on what was known as the "direct method." These little communities of students formed an interesting feature of Irish life. They fitted in well with the Irish nature and were a remarkable example of the survival of racial characteristics.

When the early Irish scholars founded their schools they did not build elaborate buildings. The founder simply built a lecture hall, and, if the fame of the teacher were great, students flocked to him from all parts of the country and from the adjacent lands of France, England, and

Scotland. There were no prepared hostels ; the majority of the students built themselves wattle huts around the master's house and there lived in the greatest simplicity. So the students of the Summer Colleges stayed in peasants' cottages and lived on the simplest and coarsest of food, but there was never a lack of pupils. The lecturers were all enthusiasts for the language, and either unpaid or else paid so little that their salary hardly covered their expenses.

The " colleges " were not run for profit ; in fact the majority of them could not have existed were it not that a grant was given by the Department of Agriculture for each teacher who obtained a certificate in the language. The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, to give it its full title, was created largely through the work of Sir Horace Plunkett, and was always more liberal than the older Government bodies towards Irish ideas. Under the secretaryship of T. P. Gill, the Department of Agriculture gave help to a number of Irish causes.

In their early days the Summer Colleges were largely attended by individuals who were learning Irish for its own sake, though there were

always a number of school-teachers who required it for the purposes of their profession. When Irish became a compulsory subject in all State-aided schools, so many teachers had to learn it that it was practically impossible for anyone else to attend the colleges. Many were reserved exclusively for teachers.

CHAPTER IV.

IRISH IN EDUCATION.

THE Gaelic League had shown Irishmen a new channel through which their love of Ireland could express itself, and not only those who were learning Irish, but many who avoided that labour, wished it to be made part of the education of the youth of the country. In the primary or "National schools" the local manager had a large control, and where the managers favoured Irish, Irish was taught; where they didn't, it was not. The manager was usually the parish priest or clergyman. By degrees the National Board was induced to provide money for the teaching of Irish, but the matter was still in the control of the manager. Though the Gaelic League by its general propaganda induced many managers to have Irish taught in their schools, yet in the majority of national schools the language was still entirely neglected.

Since 1922, of course, the whole position of Irish has been changed, and it has become the

most important subject in all national schools. The chief difficulty has been to secure teachers competent to teach Irish. Had it not been for the number of teachers who devoted themselves to learning Irish, and who gave up their holidays to attending Summer Colleges, it would have been impossible to carry out the new programme.

The system of secondary education in Ireland known as "Intermediate" education had long been unsatisfactory, and in response to popular agitation the Government decided to make some reform. Accordingly in the year 1900 a commission was appointed to enquire into the question and to suggest alterations.

Hyde and his colleagues determined that the question of the position of Irish in Irish education should be discussed fully before the Commission. In this they had the support of a strong body of opinion, backed by the Irish Parliamentary Party. Those who feared the Irish language as only another manifestation of Irish Nationalism were not less anxious to state their views. The latter included many well-known persons in Ireland. Dr. Mahaffy, Dr. Atkinson, Dr. Bernard, and Dr. Edward Gwynn, with varying intensity, urged upon the Commission the evil it would do in recommending

that Irish should be given an important position in the Intermediate examinations.

Before considering what Hyde said, it is as well to give a brief account of the evidence put forward against Irish. Dr. Mahaffy, who never lacked the courage of stating his opinions boldly, began by saying that though he thought Irish interesting from a philological point of view, he regarded the living language as of no educational value, and then, quoting Dr. Edward Gwynn, stated that the twenty years during which Irish had been an intermediate subject had diminished the knowledge of the language, a point none would contest, though the causes were far other than was implied. Dr. Mahaffy then made the statement that an expert, whose name he would not give, but who was in all probability Dr. Atkinson, said that it was impossible to find a text in Irish which was not either religious, silly or indecent, a remark which brought forth indignant replies from Irish scholars in all the countries of Europe.

A story of The O'Cahan sitting surrounded by his "naked squaws" was often quoted by Dr. Mahaffy from the account of a Bohemian traveller. It may be of interest in this connection to quote a few words from Gibbon

where he deals with the visit of the Byzantine Chalcondyles to England in 1402, who said : " But the most singular circumstance of their manners is their disregard of conjugal honour and female chastity. . . ." Gibbon's comment is : " Informed as we are of the customs of old England, and assured of the virtues of our mothers, we may smile at the credulity or resent the injustice of the Greek, who must have confounded a modest salute with a criminal embrace. But his credulity and injustice may teach us an important lesson : to distrust the accounts of foreign and remote nations, and to suspend our belief of every tale that deviates from the laws of nature and the character of man."

To complete this subject, a few words may be quoted from Professor Zimmer, one of the greatest of Celtic scholars : " If Professor Mahaffy has really given it as his judgment that Irish literature, in its bulk, possesses only texts which are ' either religious or silly or indecent,' then such a judgment is, for everyone who is practically familiar with Irish literature, beneath any criticism."

Mahaffy's evidence did not rest there, for he was subjected to a severe cross-examination by The O'Connor Don and Archbishop Walsh on

points of detail, important points, such as the number of marks to be given to " Celtic " (the word inserted by Act of Parliament), but it would be tedious to enter into details; the broad principle was whether or not Irish was to have an important place in Irish education.

Dr. Mahaffy's views are broadly indicated above as they appeared in 1900. It would seem that he modified them somewhat in later years, but they might then be taken as typical of much uninformed opinion in Ireland.

Dr. Atkinson, himself a Celtic scholar, wound up the attack on Irish. He renewed the accusation of indecency, lack of grammar and of importance. He stated that the different " patois " were each as a foreign language outside their own particular districts. Dr. Atkinson seems to have carried his objection to Irish to the point of absolute detestation; he would hardly allow a single merit to the language until, pressed by the evidence of English and continental scholars, he was compelled to admit that here and there some interest was to be found therein. Referring to Hyde's collected folk-lore material, he said: " Well, he published some stories—of course, there was nothing ethically wrong about them, but so low! " and of his

language : " No, it was not good enough to be called a patois. I should call it an imbroglio, melange, an omnium gatherum." It would seem that it took three foreign languages to supply words sufficiently forcible to satisfy Dr. Atkinson's loathing of the Irish language. Cross-examined by Judge Madden, he was asked : " What was meant by Dr. Douglas Hyde and the other authorities to whom he referred when they spoke of modern Irish ? " " Well, God knows," was his only reply. When pressed on the point of the indecency of Irish as compared to other folk-lore he took refuge in the remark : " All folk-lore is at bottom abominable."

Gwynn, though at the time of the Intermediate Commission opposed to the general teaching of Irish, has since given it practical support. He was largely instrumental in having Irish placed on the pass course of Trinity College, and as president of the Dublin University Gaelic Society gave encouragement and support to the undergraduates in the study of Irish and kindred subjects. When he became Provost Gwynn did much to help in reconciling the traditional views of Trinity with the altered conditions in Ireland.

Hyde replied to Atkinson, and as his reply

was contemporary with the attack, and is also a valuable illustration of his ability in controversy, it is not amiss to indicate its tenor here. As it would take at least sixty pages of this book to reproduce the whole, only a very small portion can be given ; for those interested the report of the Commission is a mine of information. Hyde's reply to Atkinson was reprinted by the Gaelic League (Pamphlet No. 16).

Hyde swept aside Atkinson's charge that Irish was not a language but only a series of patois spoken by groups of peasants, each patois incomprehensible to one who spoke a different dialect. " There is no dialectic difference in Ireland," he said, " so wide as that which makes one half of England pronounce words which begin with a vowel or the letter ' h ' in a manner exactly opposite to the other half. In fact England, being a larger country than Ireland, the differences in the dialects spoken over its area are far greater than any that exist in Ireland."

Continuing in this strain, Hyde showed that Irish is at least as accurate and fixed a language as English ; indeed the balance of opinion on the subject would show that Irish is the more accurate and fixed.

Hyde refuted the charge of indecency at

length. It is not necessary to repeat his defence. Such a defence was needed at a time when educational bodies were concerned with the question of teaching Irish, for educational bodies seem always to see indecency lying in wait for unsuspecting youth at every corner. Writing for others than "educational bodies," it is sufficient to say that Irishmen are much like other Europeans, except that most of the modern Gaelic writers are almost morbidly proper.

The support of Sir John Rhys, Owen Edwards, Alfred Nutt, E. C. Stern, Windisch, Dottin, Zimmer, York Powell, Kuno Meyer, Pedersen, and others from the scholastic and linguistic points of view, and that of the Irish Party in the House of Commons, overbore the opposition.

The upshot of the matter was that Irish was given a prominent place in Intermediate education. This was a big step in the direction of the universal recognition of the language.

Hyde, of course, was not alone in his labours. He was ably supported by a number of scholars—Eoin MacNeill, Dr. O'Hickey of Maynooth, Father Horgan, Father Dinneen, and others who joined in the fray and helped in the victory.

The success gained was of immense tactical

importance. It brought the question of Gaelic into Irish politics as an immediate issue. Many who in their hearts cared as little about Gaelic as they did about Kamskatka were forced to do the language lip service.

The really astonishing thing in the whole controversy is the amazing ignorance shown by such men as Mahaffy and Bernard of the literature of their own country. It is all summed up in a remark attributed to a prominent man : " I would rather have one line of Homer than the whole Book of Kells." The Book of Kells is an Irish illuminated manuscript of the four Gospels in Latin.

The Irish language has been the subject of study of numbers of the first scholars of France, Germany, and Scandinavia. It is impossible to spend ten minutes in the Irish Antiquaries section of the Dublin Museum without being convinced of the existence of a great civilisation in ancient Ireland. The name of every mountain and river is related to Irish history or legend ; these things are meaningless when once the language dies. Where but in Ireland could a number of educated citizens be found not only to oppose the teaching of the national language but to advocate its extermination if possible ?

From the day when Irish gained recognition on the Intermediate programme the number of children taking it as one of their subjects steadily increased, and when the control of education passed into the hands of an Irish Government in 1922 there were already a number of schools in which it was being well taught. One of the first steps of the Free State Government was to make Irish, to all intents and purposes, a compulsory subject. All schools getting Government grants must teach Irish for a considerable proportion of each week's work, and schools which teach Irish for more than a certain number of hours in the week get specially increased grants, while those which teach their ordinary lessons in Irish are still further favoured. As a knowledge of Irish is a necessary qualification not only for most Government employment but also for admission to the professions, there is every inducement for children at secondary schools to learn it. In the primary or national schools it is the subject to which most attention is given. In some, even of the Dublin schools, it is the language in which all lessons are taught, while in those parts of the country where Irish is still, or has until lately been, the spoken language, the schools are all Irish-speaking. In the training colleges for

school teachers Irish is the language used, so that the supply of teachers capable of teaching it—at first too small for the demand—is increasing rapidly.

It can thus be seen that as a result of Hyde's work the whole educational policy as regards Irish has been reversed in his lifetime. As far as official policy is concerned he has won a complete victory, but there are those who contend that the insistence on Irish has caused a decline in the standard of teaching in other subjects, that the amount of time and energy that must be spent by teacher as well as pupil on this one subject makes it impossible to maintain a sufficiently high standard in other subjects, and that in those schools where Irish is used as the medium of teaching, the strain on the children is far too great. It was often said by Gaelic Leaguers that one result of the attempt to teach Irish-speaking children in English was to prevent their getting educated at all, and that this was one of the causes of the comparatively low standard of education in Ireland during the first half of the nineteenth century. It must be admitted, however, that it was most effective in making the country English-speaking.

The task of reviving a language which has

died out to the extent to which Irish has died out in Ireland may prove to be beyond human power, but since 1921, in addition to voluntary efforts, the energies of the Government have been devoted to the work. The tendency of the day seems to be towards the development of nationalism in one form or another. In many countries this takes a militaristic form, but in the smaller or less warlike nations it has been associated with a language revival. Even in Norway, the least aggressive of countries, the Government is trying to revive the Norwegian dialect of the Scandinavian speech and to accentuate the differences between their language and Swedish and Danish. The Finns and Czechoslovaks, and outside Europe, the Boers, are also linguistic nationalists.

It is difficult to estimate the position in Wales, but there are numerous Welshmen who are determined to preserve their speech; and Brittany, too, has its language movement. In none of these cases had the national language decayed as it had in Ireland. To-day Irish is the native language of only a very small proportion of the people, and those are dwellers in the more isolated and poorer parts of the country. Roughly speaking, it is only spoken on parts of

the West Coast, though there is a small but vigorous group of Irish speakers in County Waterford. The Irish-speaking districts do not form a continuous line, and those who live in them are, on the whole, poor and do not travel. Even those who go as migratory labourers to England or Scotland go in groups from their own localities. Therefore each district tends to speak its own dialect, to use slightly different pronunciation, and a few phrases peculiar to itself. The difference in dialect is not very great, not nearly so great, indeed, as the difference between the speech of Somerset and Lancashire.

As things are, it will be some time before Ireland becomes generally Irish-speaking, should that day ever come. It will take a long and sustained effort not merely on the part of the Government and teachers, but of the mass of the population. The resources of the State will have to be directed without stint to the work of revival, and it will mean sacrifices not only for those who are enthusiasts, but for many who are indifferent or even hostile to the work. Whether the country will be able to complete the task remains to be seen.

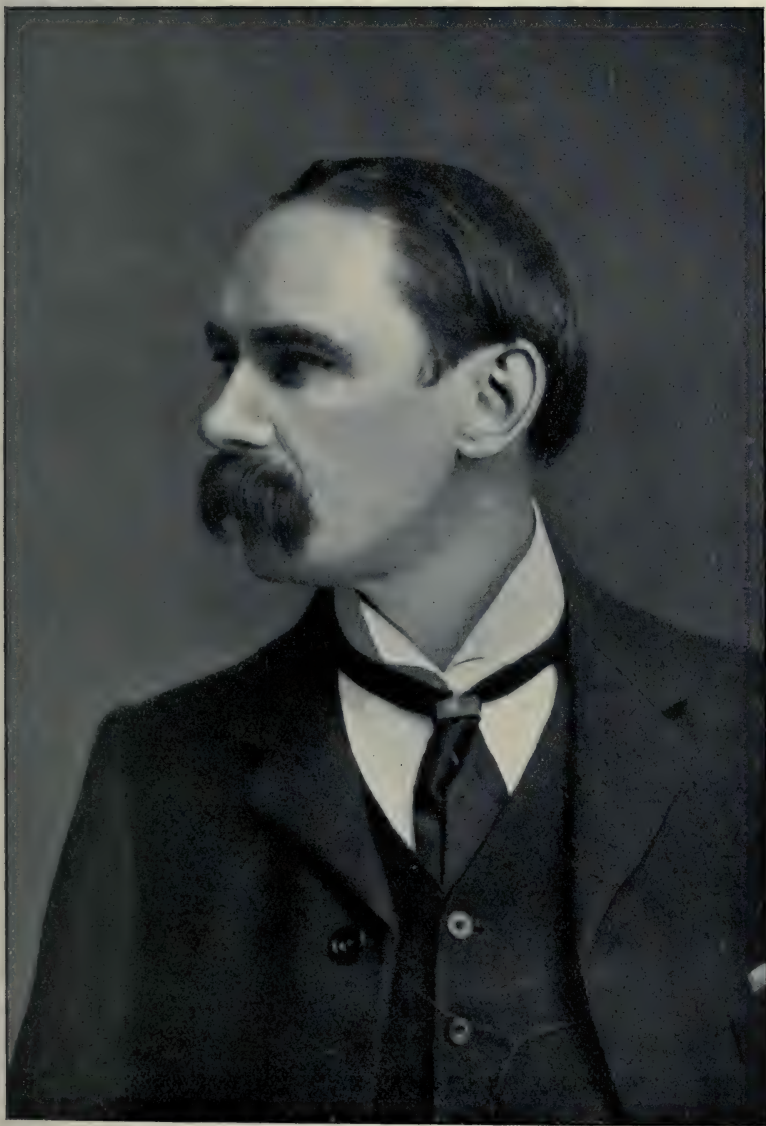
CHAPTER V.

HYDE'S VISIT TO AMERICA.

THE Gaelic League was a non-political body, but it was impossible for it to avoid politics in the broader sense of the word. The efforts to secure for Irish an important place in the educational system meant attempting to bring about a change in the law and therefore political action. Criticism of the attitude of the Government in such matters as the delivery of letters addressed in Irish, the language in which the owners' names had to be painted on carts, and a hundred similar things meant constant friction with Government Departments, questions in Parliament, or public attacks on the Government. This campaign to spread Irish into every branch of life meant ceaseless and increasing activity for Hyde and the other officials of the Gaelic League. The secretary, Padraig O'Daly, and treasurer, Stephen Barrett were constant in energy and devotion, but the increasing work meant increas-

ing expenditure, and money was scarce. The League had its five hundred and more branches but they were largely made up of poor people, and the running of a large organisation is a costly affair. There were offices to be maintained in Dublin. A big house, 25 Parnell Square, had been taken and, though the central branch paid part of the rent, the expenses were heavy. Hyde did not get a penny towards the expenses of his work, which was a full-time job, but secretaries and typists had to be paid. Now on top of the ordinary running expenses there loomed on the horizon work which would call for greatly increased expenditure. This was in connection with the proposed foundation of a new university in Ireland. To secure the money necessary for all these activities it was decided to turn to the great source of help for all Irish causes—the United States of America.

There are nearly five Irishmen in the United States of America for every one in Ireland. Thus every national movement in Ireland is sure to find considerable support in America. On any occasion when money was needed for political propaganda in Ireland, the Irish Americans never failed to subscribe largely ; they never forgot that they were Irish, and always took a keen interest



DOUGLAS HYDE

[Chancellor, 1906]



in everything affecting the land of their origin. Gaelic Leaguers in America were not to be out-done by members of political organisations, and in the winter of 1905-6 Mr. John Quinn invited Hyde over to tell the Americans about the League and to collect money for increasing its field of work.

The American Irish had already shown that they were in sympathy with the Gaelic revival. As early as 1895 the Ancient Order of Hibernians had subscribed money to found a Chair of Gaelic in the Catholic University in Washington. From the beginning of the Gaelic movement there had been individuals in the United States who were interested in Irish. The Philo-Celtic societies in Philadelphia and Rhode Island had given money to help the cause of the Irish language, and by 1905 the Gaelic League organisation was already fairly well known in America.

Dr. and Mrs. Hyde left Dublin on the sixth of November, 1905. The Lord Mayor of Dublin arrived in his official coach to attend a reception in the Gresham Hotel, and a vast procession of Gaelic Leaguers escorted the Hydés through the streets of Dublin. A large public meeting was held outside Kingsbridge Station, and at every town between Dublin and Cork at which

the train stopped, crowds assembled. It was not possible to do the journey in one day as Hyde had more receptions and meetings before him, so they spent the night at Limerick Junction. Next day he had to go to a meeting in Tipperary and he had to speak again in Mallow, so they did not reach Cork till that evening. Here an enormous crowd met him. The Lord Mayor of Cork brought him to the City Hall, where he had to speak once more. On the following morning he went to Cobh, where again there was a meeting, and a crowd followed him out to the liner. No Irishman had ever had such a send-off.

At New York they were received by John Quinn, the man to whom, next to Hyde himself, the success of his American visit was due. They were given the courtesy of the customs, an honour usually reserved for official representatives, and went to the Manhattan Hotel, where Tomás Concannon, who had been sent out a couple of months before to prepare the way, met them.

After a few days in the hotel the Hydés went to stay with Quinn at his flat in 120 Broadway, which became their headquarters. It would be hard to exaggerate the work done by Quinn for the Gaelic League

and Hyde. He arranged his tour, arranged lectures for him, collected money, kept the accounts, and was his host. Above all Quinn advised him as to how to meet the difficulties which would arise owing to the differences of opinion between large sections of Irish Americans, each of which might try to use Hyde's visit for its own local ends. Hyde's position was the more delicate in that he wanted to get in touch with wealthy men who would give large sums to the League, for the richer men had often ceased to take an active part in Irish-American politics, and in going to them Hyde risked offending important political organisations whose support he also wished to have. This difficulty arose at the very beginning of his visit. A deputation came to him to complain that he had got into the wrong hands and that the real friends of Ireland were not to be found among the rich and well dressed. Hyde had Quinn's advice as to how to deal with this problem, and was able to satisfy the deputation that he had come to seek all Irishmen, rich and poor, and that he would not refuse help from anyone. By taking this line he was able to steer clear of such difficulties. Some Irish-Americans were suspicious that he had come to undermine the

influence of the Irish Nationalist Party in America. Others thought that he should oppose the Nationalist Party, so he had to be most careful not to offend either of these groups, and besides all this, he had to avoid being made the pawn of local political moves. He was most successful in keeping a straight course between all these dangers, though at first he met with some opposition. At his first public meeting in a New York theatre the whole of the second tier had been reserved, but not paid for, by a man who said he represented certain Irish groups. On the night of the meeting the reservations were cancelled, so Hyde was faced with an enormous and conspicuous gap in his audience. Quinn managed to fill the gap by letting ordinary ticket-holders into the seats, but it was clear that an attempt had been made to spoil the meeting. In Boston, too, one newspaper printed the announcement of his chief meeting with a wrong hour and place, but those attempts to upset his tour were unsuccessful.

The Hydes visit to America lasted until the following June, during the greater part of which time he hardly spent two nights in the same town ; after speaking in one town he often had to sleep in the train on his way to another meeting next

day. Besides public meetings and lectures on the Gaelic League, he addressed the universities of Harvard and Yale on literary subjects, and spoke at numerous colleges and schools. He often had two, and sometimes three or four meetings in a day. He covered the country from New York to San Francisco, and was everywhere greeted with enthusiasm. President Roosevelt received him at luncheon in the White House. Roosevelt was specially interested in the literary side of the Gaelic movement. He had written articles comparing Norse and Gaelic folk-tales, and told Hyde that he had had to write a letter about railway rates which he knew would make him unpopular, so to get his thoughts off this he wrote an article on Gaelic poetry.

In many places Hyde found men who could speak Irish and who were enthusiasts for the language, men of every type, from workmen to university professors, from paupers to millionaires. It would not be possible to mention a tithe of those who helped him. Quinn was, of course, the chief designer of the tour, but Father Yorke, of San Francisco, and the Hon. Frank T. Sullivan, did an enormous amount of work for him on the Western coast. Mrs. Hyde accom-

panied him for the greater part of the journey.

Hyde got a great deal of help from Irish bishops and priests in America, besides Father Yorke, of San Francisco. Clergy of various denominations came to meet him. In Philadelphia he was given a public dinner, at which were Father Coghlan, the leading Gael of the city ; a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, and a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Hyde was astonished to find that the Dutch Reformed Minister had been on an American ship which had attempted to land guns in Ireland, and that the Episcopalian clergyman, Dr. Page, was a grandson of John Mitchel, the leader of the '48 movement in Ireland.

In San Francisco he had the most successful of all his visits. This was partly due to the large number of Irishmen in that city, but more to the exertions of Father Yorke. Father Yorke had been a Gaelic Leaguer for many years. He had visited Dublin in 1899, and there gave an address entitled " The Turn of the Tide." In this address he had attacked the attitude of all sections of the community to Irish. He spared neither priest nor nun ; schoolmaster, manager, parent and teacher, all got their share of his

blame, and the politicians did not escape the lashes of his tongue. Hyde privately thought Father Yorke's speech was a useful and needed stimulus, but he was not present at the meeting, and thought it wise to try to remove some of the stings. It happened that he did not meet Father Yorke on that occasion, but when he reached San Francisco he found that the ground was well prepared for him, and Father Yorke became one of his intimate and valued friends.

Hyde's time in California was occupied morning, noon, and night, and he had to make dozens of speeches at public meetings, at dinners, and colleges. Father Yorke, who also spoke at many meetings, was himself a noted orator, but he said of Hyde at the end of his Californian tour : " I have heard one lecture four times over now, but it never failed to strike a new chord."

St. Patrick's Day was spent in San Francisco, and a special service in Irish was held by Father Nugent to a full congregation, most of whom were able to take part in the Rosary and understand the sermon. At several of his meetings Hyde was able to speak in Irish, and at at least one large meeting spoke Irish only.

While in America Hyde made friends of all

types, lay and clerical. He was entertained in the homes of millionaires and of workmen. Both experiences he enjoyed to the full. The Irish clubs in every town competed for his presence. On one night in New York he visited four Irish county clubs between the hours of 9 and 1, and spoke in Irish and English at each of them. There were few places where Hyde enjoyed himself more than among the simple folk who form the Irish county clubs in the United States.

Besides the constant speaking and lecturing, Hyde had to deal with hundreds of newspaper reporters. They came to meet him on the liner before he landed and lay in wait for him in every town. When he was approaching San Francisco they met him while he was still hundreds of miles off, and travelled with him. On one occasion he was very tired and on his way to bed, so he refused to open his door to a reporter. The next day an interview appeared which cost him many cables to undo, so no matter how tired he was he had to be ready to be interviewed and look as if he liked it.

In San Francisco Hyde collected over eleven thousand dollars (£2,200), and as a result of his whole American tour collected over twelve thousand pounds. He was the first man who

had gone to America to seek money for an Irish cause who published a balance sheet of his results. Hyde knew that the money would be needed for a long campaign to secure that Irish had a prominent position in the new university which was to be founded, so he made a condition that not more than two thousand pounds should be spent in any one year. Thus from 1905 to 1910 the Gaelic League had sufficient money to carry on its work.

The Hydes returned to New York by stages, which included a visit to Canada, and held meetings in various towns on the way. Hardly had they reached New York when they got the news that San Francisco had been overwhelmed by an earthquake and that many of their generous friends were dead or ruined. Hyde telegraphed to the Coiste Gnótha for leave to give five thousand of the dollars subscribed to the Gaelic League to the relief fund. This action was appreciated by the people of San Francisco, who subscribed another five thousand dollars as soon as they had recovered their prosperity.

When the Hydes reached New York on their return journey they were almost exhausted. Mrs. Hyde had been with him nearly all the time, though she had occasionally stayed for a few

days in one place while he visited the neighbouring towns. Had it not been for her constant care he could never have withstood the strain of the tour. Though sorry to part from many good friends, they were glad to feel their labours at an end when they embarked for home on the 15th of June, 1906. By a happy coincidence, the name of their ship was the *Celtic*.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY.

IRISH had become a recognised subject on the programmes of national and intermediate education in Ireland. But quite independently of the movement for the revival of Irish, there had been agitation among the Irish Catholics for the reconstruction of university education. Their grievance was an old one ; it went back to the days of Queen Elizabeth when Trinity College was founded. Dublin University, of which Trinity is the only college, had been created as a purely Protestant institution. It remained purely Protestant for a couple of centuries, but by degrees the sectarian rules were relaxed, until the only distinctively Protestant marks that remained were the Divinity School and the College Chapel. Nevertheless, the Catholics felt that the atmosphere of Trinity was not desirable for their

children and that they must have a more distinctively Catholic University. An attempt had been made in the founding of the "Royal University" to supply higher education of a non-sectarian character; but the Royal University was more an examining body than a university, and did not satisfy the wants of the Catholics. Their regard for its religious position may be gathered from the nickname given to its constituent parts—"the Godless colleges."

The British Government after years of agitation had decided that a new university should be set up in Ireland which was to provide higher education for those who, for one reason or another, did not wish to go to Trinity. As is usual in such cases, a commission was set up to enquire into the best means of doing this. But the commission, of which Hyde was a member, did not attempt to dictate the educational programme of the new university. It was far more concerned with whether there was to be a new university or a new college under Dublin University. The violent opposition of Trinity to the creation of a new college under Dublin University made a new university the only solution, and accordingly an Act of Parliament was passed to that effect. To the Senate of the

new university was left the nature of the education to be given therein.

At first it was assumed by Gaelic Leaguers that some knowledge of Irish would be made compulsory for all students in the "National University," as it was decided to name the new body. This assumption lasted a considerable time, and they rejoiced at the idea that they would see the national language hold a high place in the new centre of Irish education. The appointment of Hyde as a member of the commission was regarded as a victory for the Gaelic ideal.

Into this atmosphere of calm confidence the Rev. Dr. Delaney, of the old Royal University, threw a bombshell which in a moment fired the country to a blaze of controversy. In the course of a speech he asked why the uneducated language of the peasant should be a test for university education. It would be difficult to imagine a sentence more calculated to arouse the indignation of patriotic Gaels. The fury awakened by the evidence of Dr. Mahaffy and Dr. Atkinson at the Intermediate Education Commission had served to spur enthusiasm. Now the ground had been prepared; the voices of Irish and foreign scholars had already been

raised to refute the charge that Irish was an uncultured tongue. The weapons were ready to the hand of the Gaelic League and the fighting-spirit of its numerous adherents was roused.

But this time the challenge had come from those whom the League regarded as its friends. It seemed as though the church to which Irishmen had clung through centuries of persecution was about to turn against the ideals of the people. Such an antagonist would be more formidable than a host of alien foes.

The challenge was taken up, and the League collected its forces at a meeting in the Rotunda. The Rotunda is the largest public hall in Dublin, and has been the scene of many of the most stirring incidents in modern Irish history. Built as a house of recreation in the days when Dublin boasted a rich and numerous aristocracy, it had first been used for balls and routs. Then it became a place for political meetings and heard one of Parnell's last speeches when his followers in Dublin rallied to the support of their doomed leader. Now it is a cinema.

But in the winter of 1908 it was still used for public meetings, and here it was that Hyde met his adherents to tell them of the new danger which threatened the Irish language and to call

on them to fight for it once more. As it was the opening of the campaign, those who thronged the room were anxious and uncertain as to what plan their leader would adopt. Would he advise a moderate and conciliatory reply to the challenge, or would he return blow for blow? Hyde answered the unspoken question in the following words: "There will be a fight," he said, "as there was a fight in the days of the Confederation of Kilkenny between the old Irish and the new Irish, between the Marquis of Ormond and Owen Roe O'Neill; and if anyone wants to know on which side I shall be, I'll be on the side of Owen Roe."

From that moment the supporters of the League threw all their energy into the fight; so fierce was the struggle, so intense the spirit which animated the protagonists, that many of the League's most devoted members seriously injured their physical health by the labours and exertions they undertook. The opponents of compulsory Irish also gathered together, and the controversy ran riot through the land. The Catholic Hierarchy, on the whole, favoured those who wished to make Irish only an optional subject, but the sagacity of Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh, and the Archbishop of

Dublin, prevented the question becoming an openly clerical and anti-clerical dispute. Both the last-mentioned prelates had stood by the Gaelic League, and Cardinal Logue, a native Irish speaker from County Donegal, and sometime professor of Irish at Maynooth, had frequently spoken both in Irish and English on behalf of the Irish language. The Bishops declared that the matter was "a question for fair argument."

Hyde and MacNeill led on the fight for the language. Dillon was the secular chief of its opponents. Dr. O'Hickey, of Maynooth, was the most determined clerical supporter of the League. Careless of his position, he wrote a series of letters in which he denounced the opponents of compulsory Irish in scathing terms. Of some he said that if they needed an outlet for their superfluous energy, "why not address themselves . . . to the task of making London University German . . . to that of making Victoria University Japanese." Again he wrote: "Let the men of Ireland pause and ponder before they commit themselves to a policy which cannot fail to be a fatal blunder. Before them lies the primrose path of expediency, adown which the voice of the siren invites them,

but whose end is national damnation, as also the thorny and doubtless less alluring path of national duty leading onwards to national salvation." But the climax of this daring priest's audacity was reached when, speaking upon the subject of the Senate of the University during a lecture to some students at Maynooth, he praised Archbishop Walsh for his invaluable services, and said : " As for the other clerical Senators, I shall say nothing further than to recommend them to your earnest prayers."

The courage of the remark is intensified when it is remembered that among the clerical Senators was Dr. Mannix, then President of Maynooth. The breach of discipline, for so it was regarded, was not readily forgiven, and Dr. O'Hickey was removed from his chair and thenceforth debarred from that career which he would otherwise doubtless have enjoyed. It is to Dr. O'Hickey's work that much of the success of the fight must be attributed.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Mannix, when a Bishop in Melbourne, became one of the most outspoken supporters of the Sinn Fein cause. That this did not prevent his becoming Archbishop shows how times have changed.

Eoin MacNeill also spoke and wrote vigorously

on the subject. His pamphlet on *National Education in Ireland* had a large circulation and considerable influence. Others less well known but not less ardent worked with equal vigour. Padraig O'Daly, as Secretary of the League, had an immense burden thrown upon his shoulders. Not only had he to organise the campaign, but he had also to supply information to those supporters whose enthusiasm was greater than their knowledge of the facts.

Meetings to advocate compulsory Irish were held in every city and big town. Hyde attended many, and nearly wore himself to a shadow by his constant work.

The Irish Nationalist Party had not taken any definite side in the matter. Some members were in favour of, some against, compulsory Irish. The atmosphere of anti-clericalism that hung around those who were for Irish frightened some members ; others from genuine conviction were in favour of purely optional Irish. Of these John Dillon was leader. John Boland was the most prominent advocate of compulsion.

The Irish Party was accustomed to hold a "convention" once a year, at which its mandate to represent the Irish people was renewed and at which it gave an account of its

work in the past session. These conventions were formed of delegates from all nationalist political organisations, together with priests and representatives of local government bodies. In February, 1909, such a convention was held, at which the question of the party's attitude was to be decided. Much hung on the decision, and it was felt that the result of the meeting would show which side was to carry its point.

Boland moved: "That this convention approves of the inclusion of the Irish language among the compulsory subjects for matriculation at the National University of Ireland." There never had been any question as to the proposer, but to find a seconder was a matter of some nicety. It was thought wise to have a priest as seconder of the resolution, but Father O'Hickey was not a member of the convention, and it was difficult to ask a priest to undertake a work which would almost certainly deprive him of all chance of future promotion in the Church. The matter had been for days one of anxious consideration, but no one had stepped forward to the post of danger. At the eleventh hour the Rev. Malachi Brennan came to the offices of the Gaelic League and, at Hyde's request, undertook the task.

Mr. Boland moved his resolution in a

temperate speech. Father Brennan seconded ably and without abuse or rancour. It should be added that his adherence to the cause of the Irish language did not escape its predicted consequences. He was forbidden to take any further public action in the matter. He undoubtedly risked his whole future when he seconded the motion.

John Dillon opposed the motion. He spoke long and, it need not be said, ably. But even the ablest speaker cannot convert a hostile audience unless he puts forward an overwhelming case. Hyde, though not a member of any political organisation, and not entitled to be present at the convention, had been asked to attend. He was called upon by Redmond to speak as soon as Dillon sat down. When he arose the whole room burst into tumultuous applause. He said that both he and Dillon were agreed in welcoming the intense interest shown by the country in education. "Why are the people taking such an interest in education?" he asked. "It is because the Irish language has galvanised into life the latent love of the people for learning."

The chairman put the resolution without expressing any opinion, and had no hesitation

in declaring it carried. The political as well as the language organisations of the country had decided that Irish must be learnt by all who sought a national education.

It need not be said that the decision of the convention was received with disgust and dismay by certain elements in Ireland, but the matter was not yet decided. The Senate had the final say, and those members of it opposed to Irish had strong backing from the Unionist papers, which had always opposed Irish in any form.

The Gaelic League decided to take action to show its strength in the country. This took the form of a procession of the sort which had for some years been organised in the streets of Dublin on St. Patrick's Day. These processions, always of considerable length, were of the nature of a pageant which dealt in a lively spirit with historical and topical events. They usually ended in an open city-space, such as Smithfield Market. In this critical September of 1909 a very large demonstration was organised on these lines. The Leaguers wished to show their strength ; they did so. They wished to appeal to the populace ; they did that, too. Their banners and their placards cried for aid to the spectators ; their short and bitter little dramas, enacted

on the tops of lorries, did the same. The coming generation was represented by a band of several thousand children, mostly from the Christian Brothers' schools. The great procession took, from first to last, three hours to pass a given point before it came to the then Sackville Street wherein, at intervals, many platforms had been erected, so that all the listeners might be reached by the speakers. Those who spoke were ardent workers of the League; their audience were Dublin men and women. On the platforms, also, a new element was present, and one which was capable of granting powerful support to whichever side it favoured. This last comprised the representatives of Irish County Councils.

Representatives, indeed, from nearly all the County Councils attended the meeting, and showed by their presence that in the country as well as in the capital the Gaelic movement had mastered the people. In the construction of the new university it had been considered advisable to afford a means of enabling students too poor to pay for their own education to do so with the aid of public monies. To this end the County Councils had been empowered to provide funds for scholarships. The County Councils were further empowered to attach conditions to

their scholarships. Now this power was used as a means of ensuring that the popular will should be reflected in the teaching of the university. Many County Councils declared that unless Irish were made a compulsory subject they would make it a condition that those who held their scholarships should enjoy them at Trinity College. When the Senate came to decide finally upon the matter, the wisdom of those who wished to make Irish an optional subject was tempered by the thought that by doing so they would deprive the colleges of a fruitful source of income.

Those who walked in the procession or attended the meeting did so with the feeling that they were taking part in a great battle for a national ideal. They left with the sensation that the battle was won and that there was no force in Ireland great enough to withstand their assault.

A deputation from the General Council of County Councils was received by the Senate with that courtesy and consideration which those who can give or withhold money ever command. The deputation was headed by Mr. Ennis, who in an able speech told the Senate that the Irish County Councils, through their General Council,

wished to have Irish placed on the course for matriculation as a compulsory subject.

The Senate bowed to the demand of the Nation, and by a narrow majority decided that Irish should be compulsory for all Irish students, but that those of foreign birth might take another language instead.

The university has now been open for some years. The number of undergraduates justifies the assertion that compulsory Irish has not had the effect of keeping students away. The whole tendency of the last few years has been to increase the importance of Irish in the National University course. There are three constituent colleges—Dublin, Cork, and Galway—with Maynooth as an allied college. An attempt has been made to make University College, Galway, into an Irish-speaking college. Galway is the only large town in Ireland in which Irish is still spoken as a native language by any appreciable proportion of the people, and it lies on the edge of one of the larger Irish-speaking districts, so that conditions there are more favourable for the establishment of an Irish-speaking college than anywhere else in Ireland. There are, however, difficulties to be overcome. It has not been easy to find a staff willing and competent to teach in

Irish. There is also a movement to increase the proportion of teaching in Irish in University College, Cork. It is possible that in the course of time Irish will be the language used throughout the National University.

The establishment of Irish as a compulsory subject in the National University was the crowning achievement of the Gaelic League. It was in the course of its campaign for compulsory Irish that the number and strength of the branches reached its maximum. It had obtained great influence not only in the County Councils, but also in the Parliamentary Party. As a political but still non-party organisation, it was in some ways the strongest body in Ireland. Its success might be measured by the fact that, except for some professed Unionists, it was rare to find even a convinced opponent of the idea of reviving Irish as a spoken language brave enough to express his opinions in public. Still the Gaelic League remained in a large measure non-political, and at least a share of the credit for the general appeasement in political rancour in the country must be attributed to the fact that through the Gaelic League it had become possible for opponents in other fields to meet. Hyde deserved much of the credit for all this.

He himself was so incapable of bitterness that a share of his charitable outlook spread to all who came in contact with him. If he is to be regarded as the man who made Irish into a prime factor in the political life of Ireland, it must also be recognised that he did more to bring Irishmen together than any man in history.

At this period a chapter in his life may be said to have closed. The battle which he had fought had been won, and it remained for others to see what could be made of the victory.

An immediate effect of the establishment of the National University was to change his life in a great degree. Up to this time he had worked solely for the cause he had at heart. He had sacrificed all he had—his time, his money, and his energy—to the Irish language. On his return from America a number of his friends, chiefly in the Gaelic League, had come together to make him a presentation. It happened that the house he lived in at Ratra, adjacent to French Park rectory, was not his own property; he was only the tenant to one of his own kinsmen, the Frenches, so his friends decided to buy the landlord's interest and give it to him. This was the only reward in kind Hyde ever received for his labours.

Now he was appointed professor of Modern Irish in University College, Dublin, while his friend and colleague, Eoin MacNeill, was made professor of Early Irish History. Miss Agnes O'Farrelly, who had been all her life a strenuous supporter of Hyde and the Gaelic League, also obtained a post in the university, and was subsequently made professor of Modern Irish Poetry.

One effect of the founding of the National University was to create a number of posts for Irish scholars who up to this had found it very hard to make a living. Most of them, like MacNeill, depended on other sources of livelihood in the Civil Service or business life, and had only been able to devote their leisure moments to Irish.

CHAPTER VII.

HYDE LEAVES THE GAELIC LEAGUE.

THE victory in the fight for compulsory Irish in the National University was the climax of the Gaelic League's activities. From that day it may be said that the influence of the Gaelic League as such began to decline, though most of the ideas which it had taught continued to grow in strength and influence.

As time went on the Gaelic League, like all human institutions, changed with the changing times. In its early stages it was the only body teaching Irish ; its classrooms were thronged with young and old, who learnt within the League a new ideal of nationality, new in the sense that it had not been brought into actual touch with their lives before ; old in the hearts and thoughts of Irish scholars from the Four Masters down.

But as time passed and the League won battle after battle, Irish began to take its place

in the minds of Irishmen. The child at school, even though Irish were not taught in his own school, could not avoid learning that such a language existed and was taught in others. So, when he came to an age when he could think for himself, the Gaelic League did not seem to be a fountain of inspired learning and a new interpretation of his own country, but simply a body which encouraged the teaching and speaking of a language of whose existence he was already aware, and which, according to the goodness or badness of his teachers, he already possibly liked or disliked.

It was not to be wondered at that the Gaelic League should have changed somewhat in the first twenty years of its existence. In the first flush of enthusiasm, with a large membership of all classes, it was an all-embracing body, with broad general views. By degrees many of those who had joined at first dropped out; it takes more than average persistence to learn a language after the age of sixteen. A growing section of Gaelic Leaguers now wished to bring the Gaelic League into active co-operation with the movements for securing political independence. There was also a small group of malcontents who, for personal or for mischievous

reasons, were opposed to the official policy of the League.

In dealing with the events which led to Hyde's resignation, it is best first to dismiss in a few lines the mischievous element and then to treat of the really important forces which caused him to resign from the body which he had brought into existence and to which he had devoted his life.

In every movement there are some members who love intrigue for its own sake, and some who feel a personal grievance, imagining that they have been slighted. Such an element existed in the Gaelic League, and as the League became more and more successful, tended to grow. Attacks on the policy and leaders of the Gaelic League began to appear in the Press, and though it was a long time before any open attack was made upon Hyde, covert criticisms were made both in the newspapers and at the Oireachtas. It would be tiresome to give any full account of such attacks, but one may be mentioned, as it brought about the first open suggestion of Hyde's resignation.

The passing of the National Insurance Act of 1911 introduced insurance stamps for certain classes of workers. A prominent

supporter of the Gaelic League (Sir) Joseph Glynn, was made Chairman of the Insurance Commission, and knighted; and Tomás Bán Concannon, who had been chief organiser of the Gaelic League, and Hyde's assistant in America, was appointed organiser of its outdoor staff. An attack was made in the Press on the leaders of the Gaelic League on the ground that the insurance stamps used in Ireland were not printed in Irish. It was further suggested that the Gaelic League had not protested against this because its leaders wished to curry favour with the British Government, which at that time was adopting a conciliatory attitude towards the official Nationalist Party. Hyde was not really suspected of this, but it was a convenient method of attempting to discredit him. The suggestion was ridiculous, but the attack was so pointed that Hyde felt it necessary to make a long speech on the subject at a meeting of the Coiste Gnótha in 1913, and to have his speech printed and privately circulated to every branch of the League. His peroration shows how strongly he felt; translated into English, it runs as follows: "There was a proverb among the Gaels long ago, 'Spend me and defend me.' The Gaelic League is certainly spending me—body, mind

and money. But I do not see that they are defending me. They have seen what is going on for some time now and have not lifted a hand or a finger against it. Therefore I have lost heart and courage, and it is not right for me or for you to have a President in this chair whose heart is not in the work. I therefore now leave this chair which I have occupied for twenty years, and put myself on the protection of the Coiste Gnótha and the country. Good-bye." This threat of resignation came as a great shock to Gaelic Leaguers; the malcontents were suppressed and Hyde returned to the Presidency of the League, but the whole affair showed how far attempts to undermine his position had gone.

The really serious change which led to Hyde's resignation two years later was the work of men of very different character. It was brought about by men who never wavered in their admiration and affection for Hyde but who were pursuing a path he would not and could not follow, and who were determined to use every means for the furtherance of their aims, even if it meant putting their friend aside.

At the close of the nineteenth century a new element had arisen in Irish politics—the Sinn Féin Movement. This movement developed to

such an extent and became so intimately associated with the revolution which swept Ireland from 1916 on, that it is necessary to emphasise the fact that in its beginnings Sinn Fein was essentially pacifist in its preachings. It was not so much a political party as an effort to spread an intellectual idea which would permeate all political parties.

The idea was no new one. Dean Swift defined it in the clearest and simplest terms when he wrote, "burn everything English except her coals." It simply meant use everything Irish—Irish clothes, Irish food, Irish manufactures generally; rely on yourselves, do everything for yourselves, resist or ignore all foreign influence. This policy was first put before the Irish people in concrete form at the end of the nineteenth century, though it had often been advocated in a vague way from Swift's day downwards. Thomas Davis in his essays said many things that might be called Sinn Fein. Besides its economic programme Sinn Fein had a bold political policy, namely, that the Irish members should boycott the English Parliament, have an assembly of their own in Dublin, and make the Government of Ireland impossible without their co-operation.

It was only natural that a movement advocating that Ireland ought to ignore the connection with England, boycott the English Parliament and behave as though she were an independent country, should be drawn towards the Gaelic League. It was equally natural for Gaelic Leaguers to be attracted by Sinn Fein. So much of the economic policy of Sinn Fein was already part of the Gaelic League programme that it is hard to say which body was leading in that field.

The first President of Sinn Fein was Edward Martyn, but its originator was Arthur Griffith, an Irishman who had gone to South Africa but returned to Ireland at the close of the nineteenth century.* In March, 1899, he published the first number of *The United Irishman*, a paper which he continued to edit down to 1920, though the name was changed to *Sinn Fein* in 1906, and from 1914 onwards it was constantly suppressed and reappeared under fresh titles.

Under the presidency of Edward Martyn the Sinn Feiners preached the doctrine of boycott

*Griffith was in South Africa at the same time as Gandhi, the Indian leader. Their political ideas had much in common, but as far as is known they never met or communicated with each other.

of England politically as well as industrially, but they devoted their attention largely to non-political matters, such as the encouragement of Irish industries. As a result there was a great spread of Sinn Fein views. The economic doctrines of Sinn Fein permeated Unionists and Nationalists alike, so that it became a common boast of Irishmen that they did not wear foreign-made cloth or use foreign-made goods when it was possible to get those of Irish make.

By degrees Sinn Fein ceased to be a purely intellectual and economic movement and became a party hostile to the Nationalist Party. As is inevitable, some took up the ideas more readily and vigorously than others and wanted to force the pace ; a fair number of converts were made, and the Sinn Feiners determined to test their strength in the country in an open stand against the Nationalist Party at the polls. Martyn was opposed to this. He contended that the movement should confine itself to propaganda and not attempt to fight other Nationalists. He was overruled by the majority of Sinn Feiners and resigned his presidency. A Sinn Fein candidate fought the Nationalist candidate in North Leitrim and was decisively beaten. This was a great

set-back to the political side of the movement, but the economic and intellectual views of Sinn Fein continued to spread.

On Martyn's resignation Griffith became President of Sinn Fein, a position which he held until 1917, when he resigned in favour of Eamon de Valera. The Sinn Fein Party was small, but it had in Arthur Griffith a leader of great determination. He was also an able journalist, and under his editorship the *United Irishman*, or *Sinn Fein*, gradually increased its influence.

Now it must be remembered that the Sinn Feiners were, many of them, Gaelic Leaguers. The mere fact that they took an actively opposite side from the official Nationalists in politics showed a certain mental energy, thus it was that some of the most active Gaelic Leaguers were Sinn Feiners. The next step was for Sinn Fein to attempt to capture the Gaelic League and, to use an expression of one of its own members, to make the Gaelic League declare itself on the side of Ireland.

Griffith openly worked towards the end that the Gaelic League should ally itself with the Sinn Fein Party. He was in favour of the revival of Irish as part of a national movement, not as

an end in itself, but he supported the Gaelic League in his speeches and writings. His original aim was repeal of the Union and the re-establishment of a parliament in Ireland co-equal with that of Britain; it was towards securing the economic and political freedom of Ireland that he bent his energies.

The course of events from 1913 to 1918 caused the old Sinn Fein Party to be merged in a republican movement which eventually swept the country, still under the name of Sinn Fein. But the Sinn Feiners were not the earliest members of the Gaelic League to hold republican views. Well known Gaelic Leaguers, such as Dr. Mark Ryan, Padraig O'Shea (Conan Maol), and probably Michael Cusack, a founder of the Gaelic Athletic Association, had been associated with the Irish Republican Brotherhood before the Gaelic League was thought of. Though older members like these no doubt sympathised with the newly-arising physical force movement, they do not seem to have been much affiliated with the younger men who were now coming to the fore. Among the leaders of the new movement which led to the rising of 1916, P. H. Pearse, Cathal Brugha, Thomas Ashe, Eamon Kent, Thomas MacDonagh, Seán T. O'Kelly, and The

O'Rahilly were prominent Gaelic Leaguers. All of these men, except Seán T. O'Kelly, were either executed or killed in the rising of 1916 and subsequent fighting. Eamon de Valera was also a keen member of the Gaelic League, but did not take much part in its internal politics. Eoin MacNeill, Vice-President of the Gaelic League, was associated with this group. Pearse was the leader of this movement, but he was also one of Hyde's strongest supporters in his efforts to keep the Gaelic League out of politics. Hyde had resisted every attempt to draw him into politics on the side of Redmond, and he was not going to be drawn in on any other side either. For him the preservation of the Irish language came first, and though he sympathised with the desire for political freedom, he was determined not to mix the two issues.

In 1913 Sir Edward Carson, leader of the Northern Orangemen, gave the physical force men their chance. He formed an armed body, known as the Ulster Volunteers, to resist the Home Rule Bill then before Parliament. Pearse, Brugha, and the others saw that here was a unique chance of reviving the physical force movement. Under the chairmanship of Eoin MacNeill they formed the Irish Volunteers,

nominally to support the Home Rule cause. The movement spread rapidly in spite of cold water thrown by Redmond and the Parliamentarians, and soon attained such importance that Redmond had to lend it his unwilling support. The Parliamentary Party came into the Volunteers and secured half the representation on the executive committee. Thousands of Redmond's followers joined the movement and soon over a hundred thousand men were enrolled. The majority of the Volunteers were not concerned with any republican movement, but some of the original leaders had no doubts of their intentions, though they did not express them publicly. Redmond's strength in the country was still overwhelming, and the leaders of the Volunteers had to keep within bounds so as not to alienate the Nationalist Party, but the Volunteers were in fact divided into two groups, one—at that time much the larger—supporting Redmond, the other working for armed rebellion. The second group was almost wholly composed of Gaelic Leaguers, many of whom wished to bring the Gaelic League into line with their political views.

Hyde saw how the tide of opinion in the Gaelic League was flowing, but even he did not foresee

how far it would go. He was still determined that the Gaelic League should remain a non-political body, and in this he had the support not only of tried officials of the League like Pádraig O'Daly, the secretary, but also of some of the most influential of the leaders of the Volunteers, such as Pearse, MacNeill, and The O'Rahilly.

Even among those who most wished to bring the Gaelic League into politics, the majority remained personally friendly to Hyde and did not wish to make his position difficult. But these men were revolutionaries nearing the crisis of their revolution, and it could not be expected that they would allow anything to stand in their way.

Cathal Brugha, who had for years been a devoted Gaelic Leaguer, was the most determined of those who wished to bring the Gaelic League into the revolutionary movement, though he was a personal admirer of Hyde. He did not conceal his views or actions, but came to see Hyde and spent three hours urging him to give up his non-political position and throw in his lot with the revolutionaries. Brugha practically offered Hyde the leadership of the political as well as the language movement if he would join with the republican party. Hyde refused his offer, and pointed out that he was not, and never

had been, a politician in the ordinary sense of the word, that he had secured support from men of all parties, from Sir Horace Plunkett to Cardinal Logue, and that he regarded himself as pledged to these men not to allow politics into the Gaelic League as long as he remained president. Brugha's offer was a remarkable one ; it is somewhat difficult to believe it was meant to be accepted, as no one who knew Hyde could imagine him as leader of a physical force movement. But however meant, it showed that Brugha had a feeling of personal affection and loyalty to Hyde, and if he opposed him would do so openly and not in an underhand way.

In the years 1913 and 1914 the Volunteer movement grew in strength. It showed signs of becoming the strongest movement in Ireland. Then in August, 1914, came the outbreak of war. In the autumn of 1914 the Sinn Fein members and the Redmondite members of the Volunteers split.

This was the position when the Ard Fheis for 1915 met at Dundalk. Meanwhile the malcontent element in the Gaelic League, though checked at Galway in 1913, was glad of a new opportunity of attacking Hyde. The tide had set towards uniting the League with the new

political revolution, and it is doubtful if anything could have stopped it, though Pearse, O'Rahilly, MacNeill, and others of the leaders of Sinn Fein were still sufficiently strong supporters of Hyde to oppose a change in its official policy.

Motions to bring politics into the League had occasionally been moved at previous annual meetings but had never been passed. An abuse had crept into the Ard Fheis in the form of proxies. Poor branches of the Gaelic League, in order to avoid the expense of sending a representative, used to give their delegates' cards in blank to members of other branches to find delegates to speak for them. At the Ard Fheis held in Dundalk in 1915, this abuse was rampant. The malcontents took full advantage of it, and it was said that one member had fifty delegates' cards in his pocket.

A resolution was moved that to the objects of the Gaelic League should be added a clause stating that the League was working for an "Independent Ireland." This was a clear issue, and many who were present thought the motion would have been defeated.

The issue was obscured by substituting the vague word "free" for the definite word

“independent.” In this form the motion was carried and next day Hyde resigned.

His position with the new rule in force would have been impossible. The word “free” is incapable of interpretation between two bodies, one wishing to be political, the other non-political. It was obvious that the majority of active Gaelic Leaguers had determined to throw the weight of the League on to the extreme political side, and any further attempt on Hyde’s part to stop this would have simply meant a fight which he was certain to lose. Hyde had not changed his views since he had made his presidential address to the National Literary Society in 1892, but the background had changed. He had fought for a literary and linguistic revival, but now his followers had gone far beyond this and were embarking on what developed into a five years’ war ; textbooks were being exchanged for rifles, and Hyde was a scholar and a literary man, not a military commander. He had to resign the leadership into the hands of men of a different type, though they were men whose outlook had been formed largely by Hyde’s own teaching.

So great was the personal respect with which Hyde was regarded that for a year no president

was elected to the Gaelic League. Many members hoped that he would come back, but this would have been a most unwise step on his part, even if it had been possible. His obvious successor, Eoin MacNeill, who had worked with him from the earliest days of the League, and who had been vice-president for years, would not accept the office. He was, however, elected president while in prison after the rising of 1916. He filled that office for a short time, but the work of the Gaelic League was largely finished, and though it carried on, it rapidly ceased to fill an important place in the life of Ireland.

Hyde felt his parting from the League deeply. It had been his life's work, and through it he had impressed his views on the country as few men have done. But he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had done all that could have been done to save the Irish language from disappearing ; he had secured for Irish an important place in the education of the country and had created an organisation for its protection which he was able to hand over to his successors in perfect working order. The events of the next few years were out of his control.

His personal position was strong. He had left the Gaelic League without making an enemy of

any man whom he respected. No one accused him of having deserted his post. As Susan Mitchell said of him in her book on George Moore, he was . . .

“ The man who drew out of the gutter where we ourselves had flung her the language of our country, and set a crown upon her; who by sheer force of personality created the movement in Ireland for the revival of Gaelic, blowing with a hot enthusiasm on that dying spark of nationalism and recalling it to life. Those who know *The Love Songs of Connacht* will not need to be told that here was the soul of a poet. The movement he blasted out of the rock of Anglo-Irish prejudice is his epic. . . . We know what Ireland owes to Hyde’s fiery spirit, his immense courage, his scholarship, his genius for organisation, his sincerity, his eloquence, and the kindness of his heart.”

It seemed then as though his public career was ended and all that remained for him was his work as a university professor and writer.

CHAPTER VIII.

HYDE AS A WRITER.

HYDE as an author had a profound influence on the Irish literary revival of the end of the nineteenth century. It is safe to say that had the Gaelic League never been founded, and had there been no movement for the revival of Irish as a spoken language, Hyde would, from his writings alone, be regarded as one of the foremost Irishmen of his day.

Before he came to Trinity College he had written poems in the Irish tongue. Since then he has published many books, both poetry and prose, in Irish and English.

Some of his Irish poetry first appeared in the *Dublin University Review*, which, edited first by T. W. Rolleston and then by George Coffey, was published monthly from 1884 to 1887 by a number of young men chiefly from Trinity College. This magazine published the writings of many men who were then or who have since

become famous. Amongst the contributors were found Standish O'Grady, W. B. Yeats, Michael Davitt, C. F. Bastable, and John Todhunter, to take at random some of the better known names. Hyde was a contributor to the review, both in Irish and English. One of his early Irish poems published therein is a lament for the disappearance of the Irish people from their land, called "Smaointe Bhróin" (Sad Thoughts). This appeared in August, 1886. In the same year an article on the unpublished songs of Ireland appeared. Hyde's first published book was a collection of Irish stories called *Leabhar Sgeulwigheachta* (A Book of Stories), which came out in 1889. From that year to the present scarcely a year has passed without seeing one or more of his works published.

It would be out of place in this book to give extracts from his writings in Irish, but, since his earliest writings were in Irish and his whole life has been devoted to the Irish language, it must be understood that the most important part of his work is in Irish. His early poems are rich in feeling and show his mastery of expression.

He was one of the earliest in the field as a collector of folk-lore and has rescued many tales from oblivion which would have perished before

the present-day collectors took up this work. As a pioneer he met with difficulties which have now largely disappeared. He gives a few directions to the collector which show how carefully he had to proceed.

"There are considerable difficulties," he says, "in the way of collecting old songs and legends, especially if the collector cares to be accurate and to take down things verbatim, for we fancy that all pursuers of folk-lore have found how the appearance of a paper and pencil acts immediately as a species of wet blanket which overawes the reciter. . . . He hates, moreover, to be questioned about words or phrases, and probably ends by becoming irritable if you insist on the explanation of some archaism which you do not understand, and to which he possibly had never attached any meaning.

"Of course as it is impossible to trust one's memory to retain a song of any length, and as the time at which one first hears it is generally no time for taking it down, one must only be content to make a mental note of how many verses were sung and comfort oneself with the hope of getting them at some future time. . . . It is generally from the old men and old women in the chimney-corner that one draws the best things. Sitting over the smoke of a turf fire, and discussing a piece of twist tobacco, which you share with the 'ban á tee,' you

can pretty easily sound her as to her knowledge about the Fianna Eireann, as to the songs and 'bubberos' (spinning wheel songs) which she used to sing as a girl; and often she will feel rather flattered than otherwise at your noting down her verses."

These words were written in 1886. Nowadays it is hard to find any corner of the country where collectors of folk-lore have not come, and the shanachies have become quite accustomed to having their stories written down by strangers, or even to speaking them into a dictaphone.

But in the days when story-hunting was still a more or less unknown art, Hyde's exceptional capacity for friendship was an invaluable quality. It is difficult to imagine anyone who could more quickly put a shy story-teller at his ease.

The results of his labours as a collector of folk-tales first appeared in the *Leabhar Sgeuligheachta* mentioned above. It was followed by a publication of translations of Irish tales called *Beside the Fire*, in 1890, and in 1891 an Irish version of the same, *Cois na Teine*. Then in 1893 came *The Love Songs of Connaught*, a book of originals and translations of Irish poems which attracted attention in Ireland and elsewhere.

In 1895 appeared *The Story of Early Gaelic Literature*. This small book, one of a series called the "New Irish Library," published by Fisher Unwin at 1s. each, was hailed with delight. The "New Irish Library" was published at the instigation of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy. In his editorship he was aided by Hyde, T. W. Rolleston, and Barry O'Brien. This series contained a number of books of great value to Irishmen, of which two at least have passed into Irish classics: Standish O'Grady's *Bog of Stars* and J. F. Taylor's *Owen Roe O'Neill*.

The *Story of Early Gaelic Literature* gave for the first time, in a popular and accessible form, an account of the early literature of Ireland. The works of O'Curry had been published for years, but besides the formidable size of his books, their yet more formidable price made them difficult of access to the casual reader. It was easy to talk about the treasures of ancient Irish learning, but not one in ten of those who boasted of their country's learning could name half a dozen of her works of scholarship.

In 1899 Hyde followed up the *Story of Early Gaelic Literature* with his *Literary History of Ireland* (also published by Fisher Unwin in a series of "Literary Histories.") The name

Literary History of Ireland is somewhat misleading, as the reader who expects to find the names of the great Anglo-Irish authors is disappointed ; a more accurate title would be *A History of Gaelic Literature in Ireland*. This book first covers the ground of the *Story of Early Gaelic Literature* in a fuller way, and then carries on the history down to the eighteenth century, with translations both in prose and verse. Many of his translations reproduce in English verse the complicated Irish verse-forms which bristle with alliteration, internal rhyme and assonance. Here are a few examples :

OSSIAN AND ST. PATRICK.

Long was last night in cold Elphin,
More long is to-night on its weary way,
Though yesterday seemed to me long and *ill*,
Yet longer *still* was this dreary day.

And long for me is each hour new *born*,
Stricken, *forlorn* and smit with grief
For the hunting lands and the Fenian bands,
And the long-haired, generous, Fenian chief.

* * * * *

Ask, O Patrick, thy God of *grace*,
To tell me the *place* he will *hold* me in,
And save my soul from the Ill One's *might*,
For long is *to-night* in *cold* Elphin.

ST. COLUMCILLE'S LAMENT.

Too swiftly my coracle flies on her way,
From Derry I mournfully turned her prow,
I grieve at the errand which drives me to-day
To the Land of the Ravens, to Alba, now.

How swiftly we travel ! there is a grey eye
Looks back upon Erin, but it no more
Shall see while the stars shall endure in the sky
Her women, her men, or her stainless shore.

* * * * *

O bear me my blessing afar to the west
For the heart in my bosom is broken ; I fail.
Should death of a sudden now pierce my breast,
I should die of the love that I bear the Gael !

This is perhaps the most beautiful of all :

How happy the son is of Dima ! no sorrow
For him is designed,
He is having this hour, round his own cell in
Durrow,
The wish of his mind :

The sound of the wind in the elms, like the
strings of
A harp being played,
The note of the blackbird that claps with the
wings of
Delight in the glade.

With him in Rosgrencha the cattle are lowing
At earliest dawn,
On the brink of the summer the pigeons are cooing
And doves on his lawn.

Considering that the greater part of Hyde's energy was given up to propaganda, it is remarkable that no trace of this is to be found in his Literary History which at once impresses the reader as being the work of a scholarly mind. In the early chapters this is shown in a careful analysis of the earliest writing from the point of view of historical accuracy. Hyde does not take anything for granted, but works carefully from step to step in his enquiry as to how far it is possible to rely on the early authorities and as to how much of the legendary history of Ireland is founded on fact. His critical attitude towards Irish literature is maintained all through ; in places he seems to be unduly cautious, and to reject as unproved, episodes which if they were related in the history of any other land would be readily accepted as true. All this is interesting in the light it throws on Hyde's character. The leader of a popular movement seldom shows moderation and restraint in his writings on subjects akin to his movement.

Hyde as an author comes in a group of

distinguished Irish writers—Standish O'Grady, W. B. Yeats, George Russell (A.E.), Lady Gregory, J. M. Synge—most of whom gave to and took from the others and built up a distinct literary movement which came to be known as the Irish Literary Revival. Edward Martyn, though associated with this group, stood outside it, more part of the Continental spirit of the end of the nineteenth century. His little known satire, "Morgante the Lesser," written before he came in touch with the Irish literary revival, shows a mind which has been formed on quite other lines than those of the Celtic tradition. It is only Irish in that there has been no book of the sort written since Swift which shows such strength and directness.

Yeats, however, owes much to Hyde. He has been by him introduced into a realm of literature which has profoundly influenced his writings. Yeats fell under the spell of the movement for the revival of Irish, and for some years used to appear on Gaelic platforms. Thus Hyde may, without detracting from Yeats' genius, be said to have left a mark on his writings. Yeats also has helped Hyde's work. He has always been a consummate debater, and in words and writings has supported the Irish language movement.

He, in conjunction with Edward Martyn, created the Irish Literary Theatre, from which the present Abbey Theatre grew. At one of the earliest of the performances of the Irish Literary Theatre, "Maeve," by Edward Martyn; "Diarmuid and Grania," a curious and unsuccessful collaboration by Yeats and George Moore, and Hyde's first play, "Casadh an tSúgáin" (The Twisting of the Rope), were produced. This short comedy was the first play in Irish to be acted at one of the bigger Dublin theatres, the Gaiety. Hyde himself acted in the principal part, and did so with success. Since then he has several times acted in his own plays, notably in "An Tincéir agus an tSídheog," in Moore's garden in Ely Place, acted to a chorus of howls from a next-door neighbour, with whom Moore had a desperate quarrel, and in "An Pósadh," at the Rotunda.

Lady Gregory, who may be regarded as a disciple of Yeats, but who has undoubtedly influenced his writings, knew some Irish, and translated and published literary, as distinct from purely scholarly, translations of Irish tales. She also translated several of Hyde's plays, notably "The Workhouse Ward."

Standish O'Grady, himself an Irish historian,

owed nothing of his work to the Gaelic Revival, though he helped the movement in his paper, *The All Ireland Review*. He, somewhat earlier in time, paved the way for a revival of interest in Irish.

It appears that the Irish literary movement owed much to Hyde's work for its basic ideas. It also owed much to him in that his movement for educating Irishmen in a knowledge of their own country prepared an audience for Irish writers. When this has been said, how far is Hyde identified with the Irish writers of the early twentieth century?

On the whole, the answer seems to be that Hyde is not to be regarded as one of them. He stands quite apart. He does not base his reputation on his writings or his literary work ; he was associated by environment and friendship with many of the literary men, but he did not seem to belong to them. His writings are all more scholarly than literary. This does not mean that he is a dry, pedantic writer ; his writing is living and virile and shows that had he chosen to devote himself to writing he would have been among the leaders of the literary men. Yeats has expressed his indebtedness to Hyde's clear and simple style. But Hyde has not written a single book of pure

literature. All his writings are associated with the Gaelic Revival. He has published folk tales, but not as did O'Grady in *Finn and His Companions* or Yeats in *Irish Fairy Tales*. These are clearly the writings of men who hear a fine story and feel impelled to tell it in a beautiful form. Hyde's publications are as clearly those of a man whose first object is to record the tale in its traditional form. If there are two or three renderings, he compares them from the point of view of their antiquity or style. If he writes a translation, the translation is intended to show the spirit and, as far as possible, the form of the original story. The fact that Hyde is a fine writer enables him to do this with singular success, but this is accidental to the main object.

Besides his Irish poetry, of which Hyde has published little, his only writings which are not directly concerned with the Gaelic movement are his plays. Even these were largely written to provide some short plays for Irish-speaking actors. None of them are more than one act, but they all show dramatic power. To non-Irish speakers the best known is "Tigh na mBocht," very happily adapted into English as "The Workhouse Ward," by Lady Gregory. "An

Tincéir agus an tSídheog '' (The Tinker and the Fairy), '' An Póadh '' (The Marriage), and '' The Lost Saint, '' also short plays, are still the best of their kind in Irish.

There was no native drama in Irish ; even Mystery and Morality plays are not found among the works of earlier Irish writers. The nearest approaches to drama found in Irish literature are dialogue poems such as that between St. Patrick and Ossian. These dialogues are very far from drama, and obviously were never intended to be acted in even the most rudimentary way. Hyde, however, wrote what is probably the first Mystery play in Gaelic, the '' Dráma Bhreithe Chríost '' (Nativity Play), first acted at the Ursuline Convent, Sligo. It was afterwards translated into English by Lady Gregory, and has been acted on several occasions.

Mention should be made of a play written during the height of his controversy with Trinity College '' Pleusgadh na Bulgóide '' (The Bursting of the Bubble). It is a satire on the attitude of the Trinity professors towards Gaelic, and is one of the few things Hyde has written which could be considered malicious. The different professors are brought in under thinly disguised

names and have a terrible curse pronounced against them which makes them able to speak no language but Irish. It is the day a visit is expected from the Lord Lieutenant, and the dismay and misery of the professors, who find themselves talking a "vile jargon," is amusingly brought out. When he was reconciled to Trinity College Hyde had some regrets at having written this somewhat savage satire; but it is so humorous that it has been produced several times, though the edge has somewhat worn off the satire as most of those pilloried are dead, and others have modified their views.

His literary output continued all through his strenuous work as leader of the Gaelic League, and even in the year 1906, when he had just returned from his exhausting American tour, he produced one of his most important works, *The Religious Songs of Connacht*.

In 1915, when his difficulties in the Gaelic League were at their height, he produced a collection of tales in prose and verse, called *Legends of Saints and Sinners*; it consists mainly of stories of early Irish saints translated into English.

The years 1915 to 1923 were those of the Great War and of fighting in Ireland and

not a time for producing books, but in 1918 Hyde and D. J. O'Donoghue published the catalogue of books and manuscripts in the Gilbert collection in the Dublin Corporation Library, a work of nearly a thousand pages. Hyde also founded and published a yearly journal, *Lia Fáil*, for the Simpson bequest to the National University. He was one of the founders and treasurer of the Irish Folk-lore Society, and has published numerous articles in their journal, as well as two complete collections of folk-tales under their auspices, and this year, 1938 (dated 1937), has published two autobiographical volumes in Irish—*Mise agus an Connradh* (Myself and the League) and *Mo Thuras go hAmerice* (My Journey to America)—so that his literary output has remained constant throughout his years of intense activity and those of comparative leisure.

Of all Hyde's literary work *The Love Songs of Connacht* may be regarded as the greatest. This was first published in 1893 and several editions have appeared since then. It introduced a whole new range of Irish poetry to the English reader. Hyde's translations of Irish love songs, whether in prose or verse, reach a high literary standard. Several are given in Stopford

Brooke and T. W. Rolleston's *Treasury of Irish Poetry*. Here is a less well known one :

O MAURYA, TAKE MY LOVE.

O Maurya, take my love, love of my heart thy love,
Love without fear or failing;
Love that knows not death, love that grows with
 breath,
Love that must shortly slay me;
Love that heeds not wealth, love that breeds in
 stealth,
Love that leaves me sorrowing daily;
Love from my heart is thine, and such love as mine
Is found not twice—but found is unfailing.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM RETIREMENT TO PRESIDENT.

HYDE'S work in the Gaelic League ended with his retirement in 1915, and he had at last a time of comparative leisure. His lectures as Professor of Modern Irish in University College, Dublin, occupied much of his time and his literary work continued, but he was relieved of the strain involved in his efforts to keep the Gaelic League within the bounds which he had marked out for it. At last he was able to take up golf, a game he had always wanted to play, but had never had time to learn.

Early in 1916 he spoke at a meeting held in the Mansion House, Dublin, to protest against the withdrawal of Government grants for the teaching of Irish, but he took no part in public affairs during the troubled years which followed the rising of Easter, 1916.

In the National University the force of his personality was felt, particularly by those who

heard him in the private meetings of the various societies which were devoted to Irish subjects, but on the whole he may be said to have withdrawn into his own work and circle. His house, 1 Earlsfort Place, Dublin, was a meeting ground for many old friends. Both Dr. and Mrs. Hyde were admirable hosts and their hospitality was great.

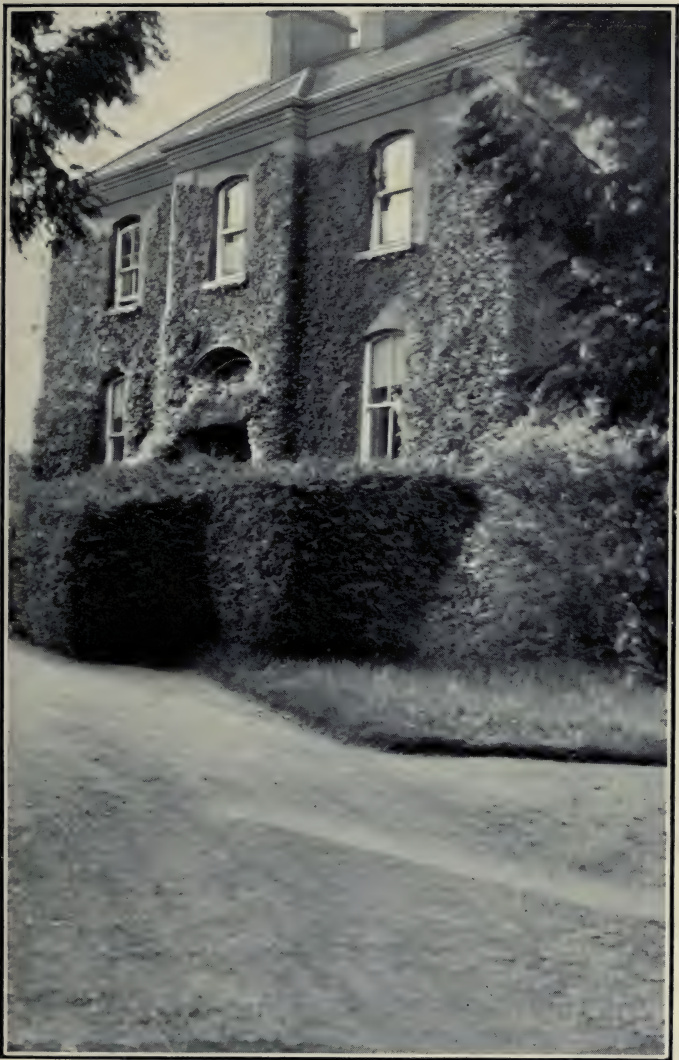
Some of his old supporters made an attempt to re-assert his influence in the Gaelic League and bring him back into active work there, but he gave no encouragement to such efforts. Men's minds were wholly absorbed in the war and politics, and politics in Ireland were rapidly becoming concentrated on the physical force movement where there was no place for Hyde. Many of those who had taken part in the events which led up to his resignation had been shot or imprisoned and their place was being taken by younger men who had grown up in the Volunteers and whose minds were occupied with military matters.

When the wars in Ireland were ended a new society for the study of folk-lore was formed, with An Seabhac (Padraig O Siochfhradha), one of the best known Irish-Ireland workers, as president and Hyde as treasurer. An Seabhac

was a collector of folk-lore and a successful writer in Irish. Hyde was pressed by An Seabhac to accept the presidency of the new society, but his refusal showed how much he wished to keep himself in the background. This society has done much useful work, and its editor, Seumas Delargy, has been appointed to the lecturership of folk-lore in University College, Dublin. Some of its publications have already been noticed in the chapter on Hyde as a writer.

Hyde did not lose touch with Trinity College ; he frequently spoke at the annual meetings of the College Historical Society, and was elected its president on the death of Lord Glenavy, a former Lord Chancellor and first Chairman of the Senate of the Irish Free State.

Hyde had retired so much from public life that he was not nominated for the Free State Senate in 1922. However, on the resignation of Senator Sir Hutcheson Poë, he was unanimously co-opted a Senator in February, 1925. But he had no desire to take part in political life. Ordinary politics had little appeal for him and he only spoke twice, once in Irish on the death of Senator Dr. Sigerson, who was an old friend of his, as well as an accomplished translator of Gaelic poetry and a historian of some repute.



"RATRA," CO. ROSCOMMON

His second speech was in English, but on the subject of Government help for the Celtic Congress which was held in Dublin in 1925, and of a grant given in aid of the production of plays in Irish. Hyde's term of office as a co-opted member expired in December, 1925. He allowed his name to go forward at the triennial election which followed, but made no effort to secure votes. He was not returned. That particular election was remarkable in that the whole adult population of the Free State voted as one constituency, but the result was so unsatisfactory that the method of election was altered before the next triennial period terminated. Hyde, however, did not come forward under the altered form of election and was not again a Senator until he was selected by Eamon de Valera as one of the nominated members of the newly constructed Senate which was formed after the Constitution of 1937 had been enacted. His membership of this Senate was even shorter than his previous period as a Senator : he only attended one meeting before his election as President of Eire put an end to this second term of office.

Up to 1932 Hyde had continued to hold his professorship and to lead his quiet life of scholar-

ship. On his resignation from the Professorship of Modern Irish a number of his friends, led by An Seabhac, thought it a fitting opportunity, to show their admiration for his work and respect for his personality. They therefore formed a committee to pay him public honour. A large sum was subscribed in a very short time, and in the summer of 1935 a presentation was made to him in the Mansion House, Dublin, followed by a public dinner at the Gresham Hotel. The success of this presentation, which took the form of an annual prize for the best literary work in Irish, showed that in spite of the way in which Hyde had withdrawn himself from public life, his name was still able to arouse enthusiasm.

But he himself withdrew even further from public affairs; he gave up his house in Dublin and he and Mrs. Hyde retired to Ratra, the house in County Roscommon, which had been given to him by his friends over a quarter of a century earlier. Though he continued to write, it seemed unlikely that he would ever again appear in a prominent public position. Apart from writing, his main interests were golf, and shooting and fishing over the same fields and waters he had shot and fished as a boy.

His interest in the revival of Irish was not

dead : a few weeks before he was nominated as President of Eire he came to Dublin, at the suggestion of his friend, An Seabhac, to take part in the movement to revive the old Gaelic Oireachtas. But this was his only appearance in public.

During all this period of Hyde's retirement much had been happening in Ireland. The events from 1915 to 1938 were largely the outcome of ideas which had germinated in the Gaelic League and for which Hyde was in a large degree responsible though he had not envisaged, and was not responsible for, the way in which his teaching bore fruit.

The rising of 1916 was followed by a rapid increase in Sinn Fein and Republican influence in Ireland. The story of why this happened and how it developed is to be found elsewhere. This book deals only with Hyde and his part in events, but it is necessary to give a very brief outline of some of the events to show how he came to be chosen President. Most of the leaders of the rising were shot : Pearse, MacDonagh, Kent, and O'Rahilly among them. The most prominent of the military leaders who survived was Eamon de Valera, who became head of the movement. Among those associated with him were Richard

Mulcahy, Michael Collins, and Cathal Brugha, besides many whom it is not necessary to mention here. At the general election held in 1918 the Redmondite Party was wiped out and Sinn Fein won an overwhelming victory.

The newly elected Sinn Fein members set up a parliament in Dublin and attempted to govern the country in opposition to the existing British Government. This attempt and the efforts to suppress it developed into a guerilla war. After two and a half years of fighting a truce was signed between the Irish and British in July, 1921, and was followed by a treaty signed in December of that year. The Sinn Fein Party was split from top to bottom over the acceptance of the treaty and a civil war followed which left in its train a great deal of bitterness on both sides. The leader of those opposed to the treaty was de Valera; the leaders of those supporting it, Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins. Cathal Brugha was killed at the beginning of the civil war fighting against the acceptance of the treaty. Griffith died in August, 1922, before the civil war had well begun, and Collins was killed in the same month. William T. Cosgrave then became leader of the pro-treaty party and President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State.

For some years de Valera and his followers refused to enter the Dáil (House of Commons).

Of those who supported the treaty, Eoin MacNeill, Mulcahy and Blythe, were enthusiasts for the Irish language, and when they became Minister for Education, Minister for Defence, and Minister for Finance, respectively, exercised an important influence on the Executive Council. They introduced Irish as a compulsory subject in all the schools which got State aid, and did everything in their power to foster the language in the civil service and outside. In this policy they had the support of the Dáil. De Valera and his followers, though opposed to the Cosgrave Party on most points, supported everything which tended to encourage Irish. The Irish language was the one point on which the two parties were practically unanimous.

A constitution had been drafted which declared that Irish was the language of the Irish Free State though English was also recognised.

In 1927 de Valera and his followers, many of whom had been elected but had refused to take their seats, decided to come into the Dáil, and in the election of 1932 obtained a majority. De Valera became President of the Executive Council, and Seán T. O'Kelly (ex-secretary of

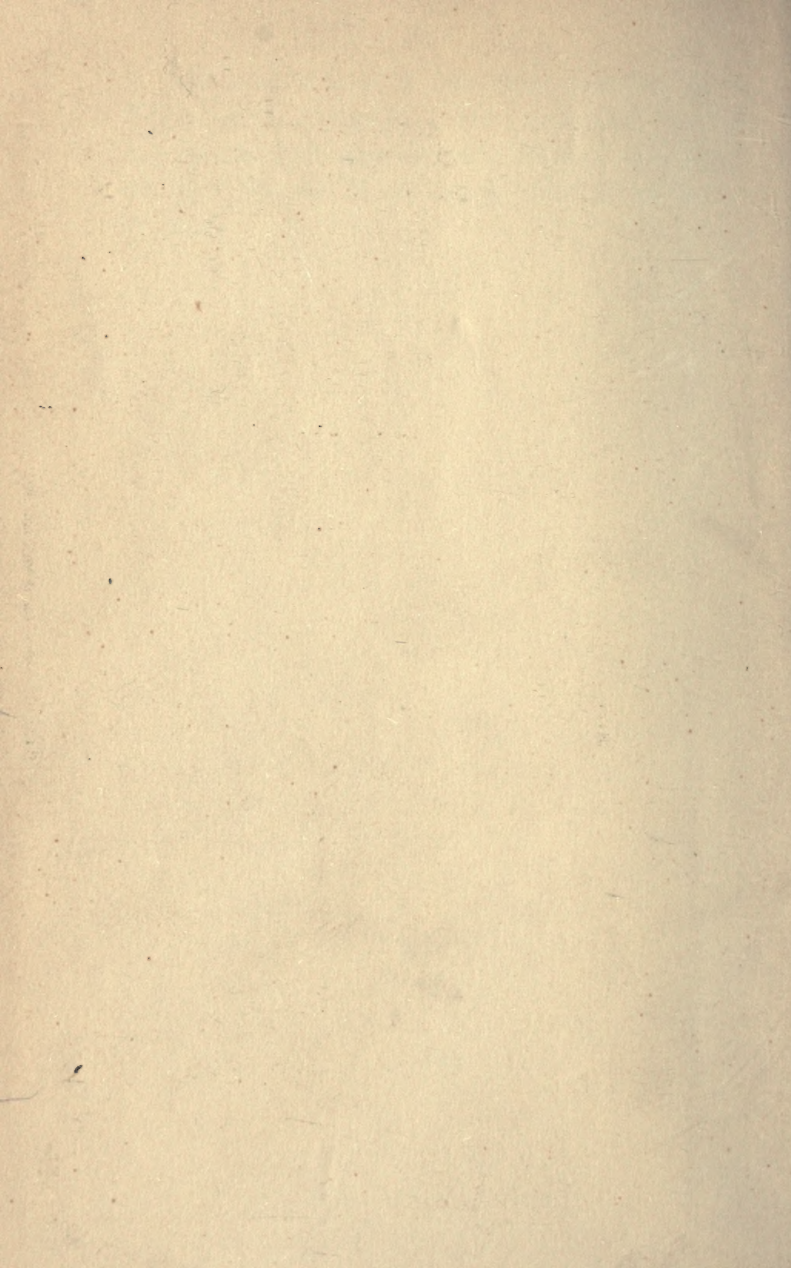
the Gaelic League), Vice-President, so that it was a change from one group of Gaelic Leaguers to another. De Valera had been opposed to the form of constitution adopted for the Irish Free State and determined to substitute for it one on more republican lines. The old constitution provided for a Governor-General appointed by the King, though on the advice of the Irish Free State Government. The new constitution abolished this office and substituted therefor a President. The name Irish Free State was dropped. The President was to be a man above party politics with powers somewhere between those of the King of England and the President of the United States. He was to be elected for seven years by the general votes of the people.

The new constitution came into force on the 29th December, 1937, but it was not necessary to elect the President until May, 1938. The question as to who would be President arose at once, but after months of talk no name was agreed upon. Hyde's name was among the first mentioned, but it was tacitly assumed that he would not be willing to stand. It was, indeed, well known that he would never go forward for a contested election, and one man had already signified his intention of standing. It was

generally felt by all parties that a contested election would be most unfortunate, but it seemed equally clear that there was no available candidate on whom all parties would agree. The matter was one of great difficulty, but at last a conference was arranged between two members of each of the two main parties. There was much speculation as to what would result, but the conference was surprisingly short, and resulted in the unanimous recommendation of Douglas Hyde.

The only matter of doubt was whether would Hyde accept? It was known that he was enjoying a well-earned rest and had no desire to return to public life. True, he had not lost his interest in Gaelic matters, though there was no need for his propaganda now that everything he had advocated was being done in a way that he could not have dreamt of twenty years before. There seemed to be nothing to tempt him to return to public life. But a real difficulty had arisen and he was the one man who could solve it: it was felt that his sense of duty would not allow him to refuse. His nomination was acclaimed by all sections of the community. His reputation was so great that even those still opposed to the revival of Irish felt that Hyde was

a man who would fill the chief position in the State with honour. He accepted without hesitation, and was elected, without opposition, on the 6th of May, 1938, first President of Ireland.



DA
965
H9C6
1938

Coffey, Diarmid
Douglas Hyde

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY
